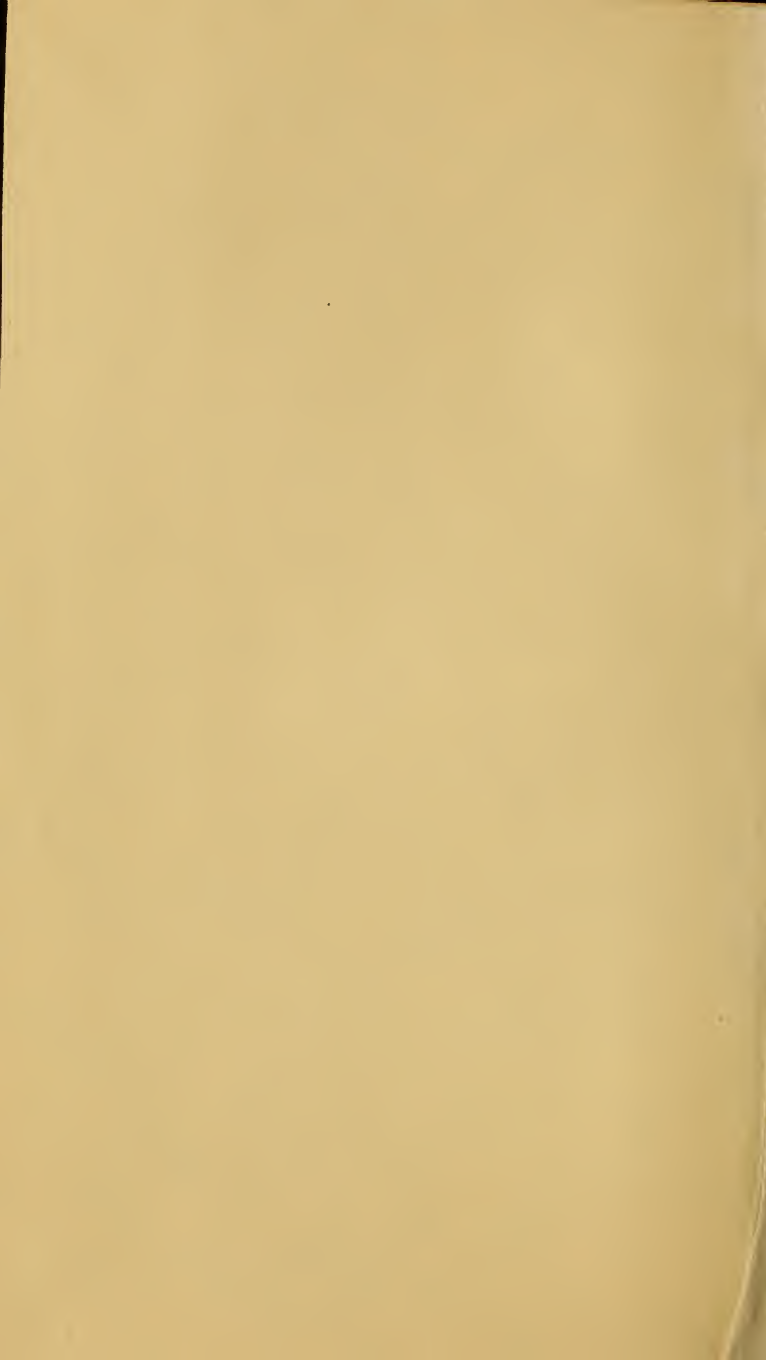
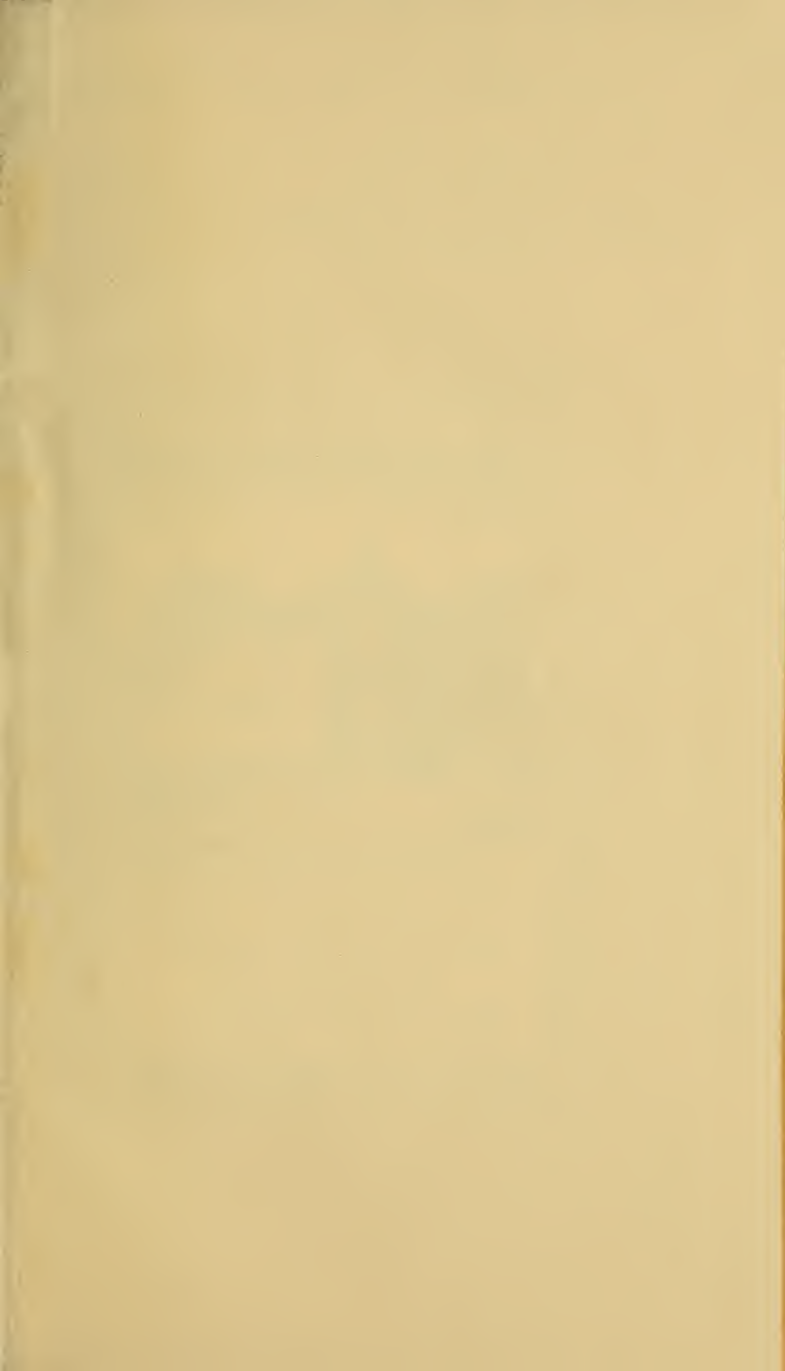
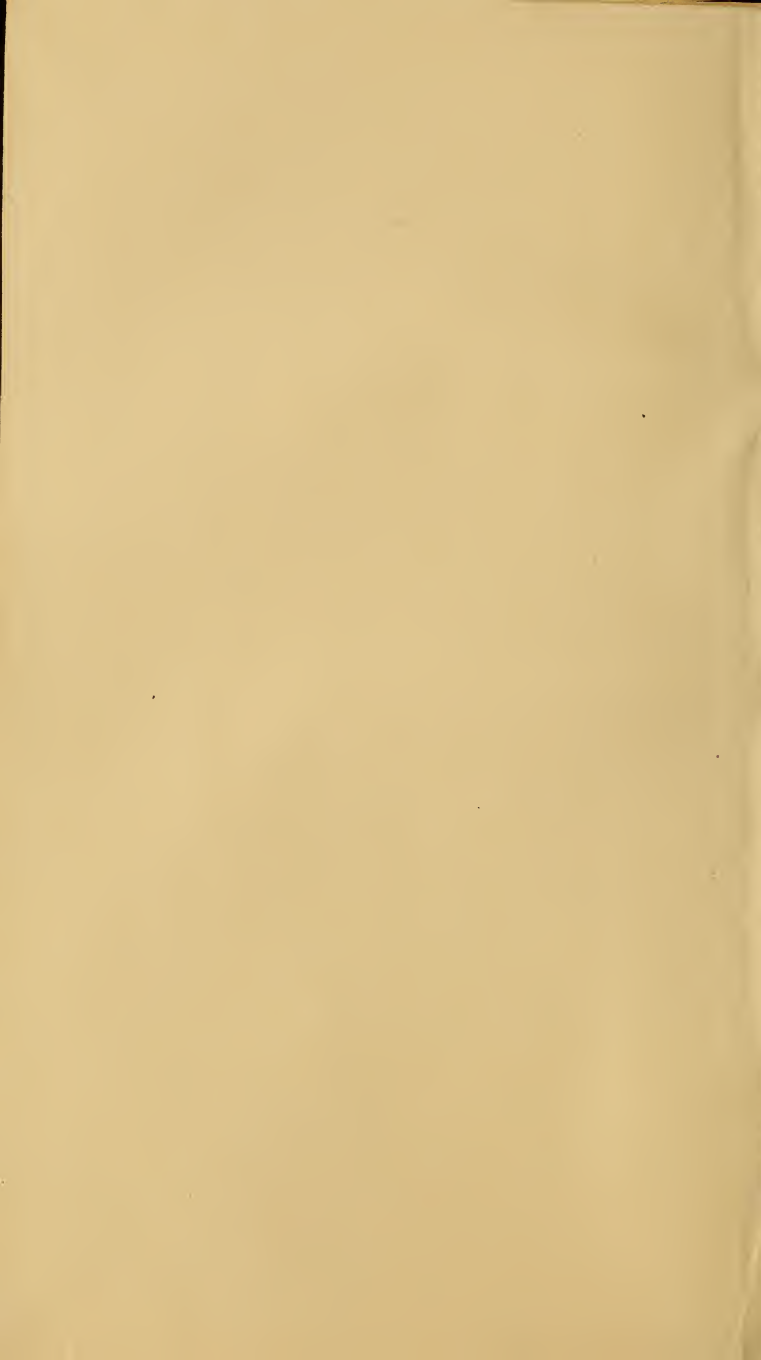












2nd Mo.

Benj. Ferris.

1806

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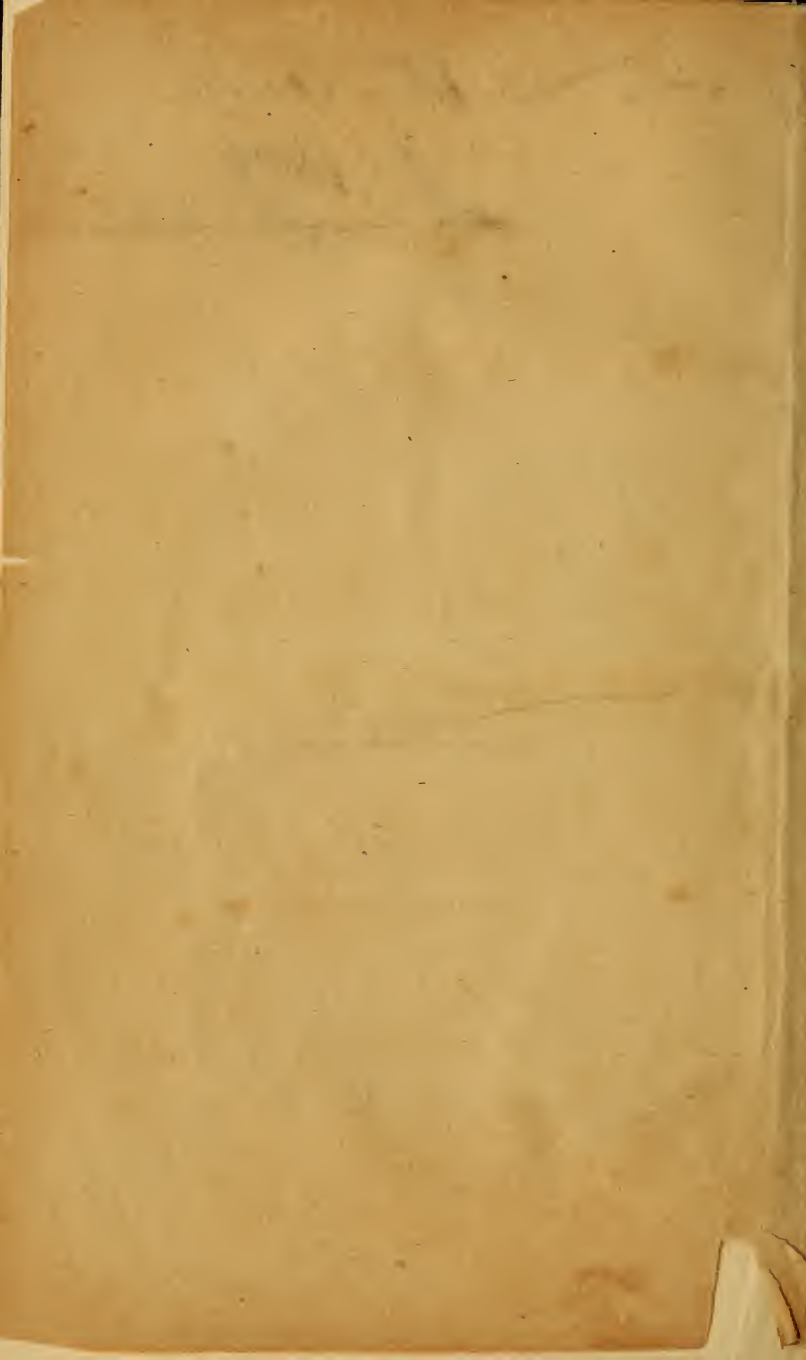


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LETTERS

ON

RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS,

WRITTEN BY

DIVERS FRIENDS, DECEASED.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN LONDON,
BY JOHN KENDALL.—1802.

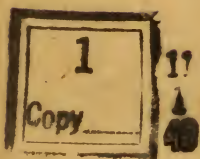
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PREFACE.

IT is thought that the friendly and familiar letters which are here collected, would not only be instructive and pleasant to those of the same religious society with the writers of them, but might tend to shew the disposition and views of this Society, better than a treatise written purposely in the defence of the principles professed by it.

The reader will perceive an unfeigned love and affection to have prevailed in the minds of the writers, one towards another; and that their principal view was to promote the best interests of their friends. It will be seen also, that in thus expressing their sentiments on religious subjects, without any expectation of having them made public, they agree in all the essential principles of the religion of their great Lord and Master Jesus Christ, in whom alone their hope of salvation was placed. It is true, they more insist upon the practice of piety and

a virtuous conduct, than upon speculative views of the Truth, or ceremonial institutions; which may be helpful to those who use them conscientiously, but are not to be esteemed essential to our happiness.

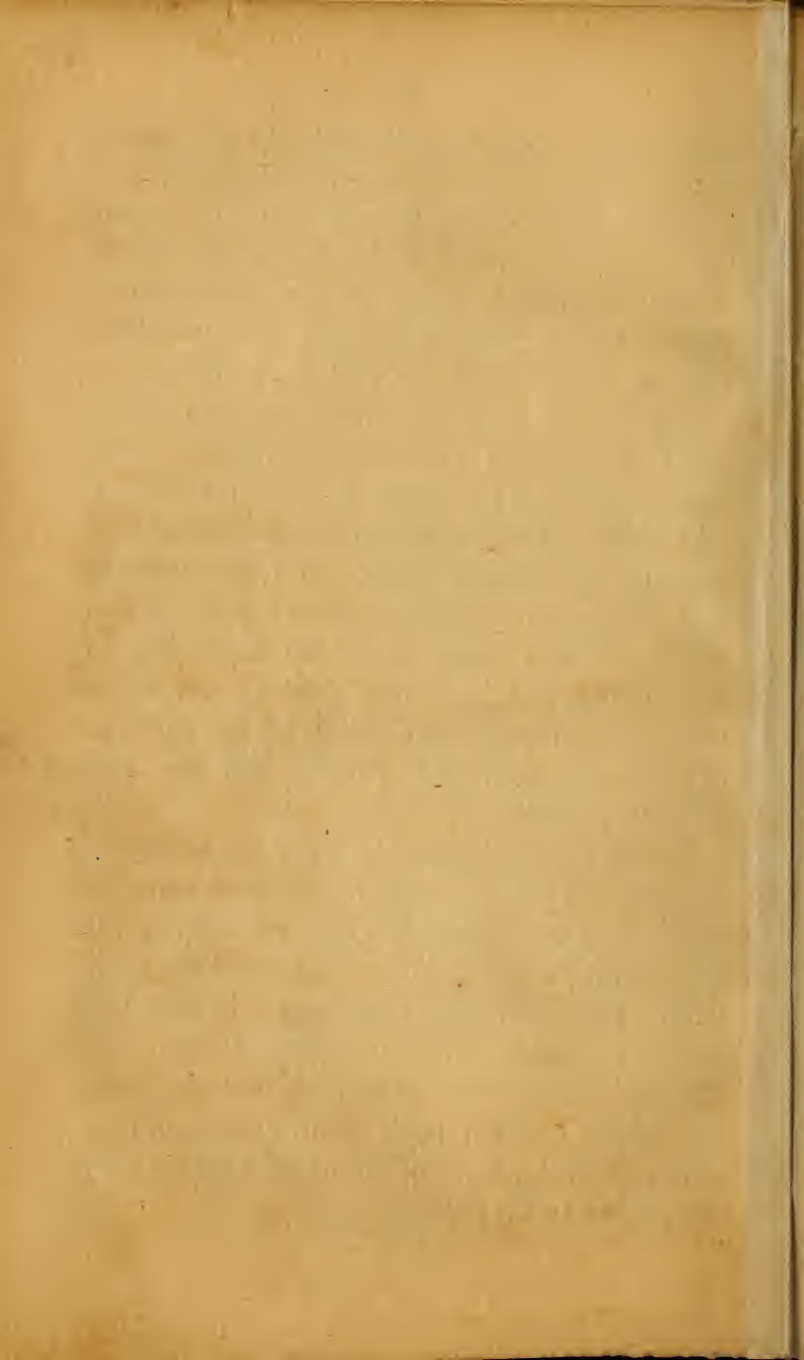
Though it is not usual with those of the Society of which the writers of the following letters were members, to express the names of God and Christ so frequently in their writings and conversations, as some other religiously disposed persons, it proceeds not from any doubt, or disbelief in their minds, concerning the great truths of the Christian religion. They fully believe what is said in the Holy Scriptures of the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ, our Lord; his sufferings, and death on the cross, his resurrection and ascension; as also his mediation, and intercession with the Father for lost man; and, that there is no salvation but in and through him. They desire to think upon these awful truths with great reverence, but are cautious of making them a topic of common conversation, lest their weight and importance should be lessened; at the same time they approve of religious conversation, with a due regard to the subject, and sense of their own weakness, and of the the need they have of wisdom to

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direct their speech, lest they should touch sacred things, as with unhallowed hands.

It may be remarked that though they do not use those ceremonies which some professors of the Christian religion seem to think necessary to retain, esteeming them not essential, and as being liable to abuse by too great a stress being placed upon them, to the neglect of the more vital part of religion; yet they desire to be united to the living body of Christ, which consists of members distinguished by various names and professions, and dispersed through different parts of the earth. These they desire to embrace, as brethren in Christ; partakers of the same excellent privileges, of which all the children of the one universal Parent, and the one Saviour partake.

It was found difficult to place the letters in the order of time in which they were written, but it may be observed, they are all of the last century, and some of them of very late date. Many extracts from letters of our late much esteemed friends John Rutt and Richard Shackleton, of Ireland, are introduced, which contain such sentiments on religious subjects, as, it is thought, will be very acceptable to the reader.



LETTERS.

LETTER I.

THERE is not one among thy sorrowful acquaintance who hath felt the force of sympathy with thee, on the present afflicting occasion, with greater tenderness than myself; although I have not hitherto expressed it.—I own, I seldom chuse to meet the painful gust of sorrow with calm advice; I would rather mingle the tear of sympathy, and aid the solemn tribute due to those who are no more; religion allows it; for his friend Jesus wept. But it is now high time for the violence of sorrow to subside, and the mind to endeavour after a calm acquiescence in the disposition of unerring wisdom, which hath numbered the hairs of our head; and not one of them falls to the ground unnoticed of him. I know some mournful considerations urged for a place with thee: a beloved brother dead, on a distant

shore, uncertain whether every act of tender assistance was yielded him; but remember, dear friend, the provision of the highest reached him there, and that the everlasting arm supports and succours the islands afar off! I have not a doubt of his being admitted where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

Endeavour, therefore, to suppress the sigh and the tear which border upon murmuring: good is the Lord in all his works: he deals with his family in a wisdom we cannot comprehend: my heart is too full for language to discharge, and my feeble hand hardly sustains this labour: but I wanted to mingle with thee the tear of condolence, on account of the dear deceased; and to endeavour to lead to a calm resignation, and to a pursuit of riches, unchangeable in their nature, and everlasting in their duration.

LETTER II.

10th Mo. 9th, 1771.

DESIRES for thy welfare have frequently suggested sentiments, which a variety of engagements, or indisposition, have prevented my intimating to thee; this consideration hath

also prevailed, What can I say to him which he knows not, either with respect to his present or future well-being? the opportunities of information, outwardly, and the impressions of essential truths, inwardly, have foreclosed every plea of ignorance, of duty, or of what makes for peace. But remember, that happiness consisteth not in knowledge; the words of our great Lord are, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." My soul seeks earnestly, that the blessing of faithfulness may accompany the privilege of knowledge; otherwise the greater will be the condemnation.

Thy lot is changed from the warm bosom of society to a land of drought, where the distilling of heavenly doctrine outwardly as the dew, is little known, and with many little desired. Nevertheless, those who seek wisdom, so as to be made wise unto salvation, may find in themselves the flowings of that river which makes glad the whole city of God. Feel after this in thy own heart, to preserve thee, among the few names in that Sardis who walk in white, and have not defiled their garments; that so thy peace may be promoted, and others helped. Think of this awful query, "What is a man profited, if he could

gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

The climate is often unhealthy; let it put thee upon thy guard, in every respect, and raise fervent care, that whenever the Master of the house cometh, he may not find thee sleeping, or worse employed.

I am, with sincere desires for thy present and eternal happiness, thy assured friend.

LETTER III.

2d Mo. 18th, 1755.

I RECEIVED thy awakening epistle, of the 30th of 12th month last; the more acceptable as it comes from one who seems to have undergone dispensations of Providence nearly like those which have lately fallen to my share. I can truly say, I concur with thee in wishing, that our being raised up from the brink of the grave in this the evening of our day, may occasion our being more devoted to God, and less to the world, and ourselves. I have been long of the mind that all our outward concerns should be consecrated to God, and transacted with a constant view to his will, in the several stations assigned us: and, that a multiplicity of business is a great enemy to

the spiritual life, and prudentially to be avoided in these our declining days ; which, in an especial manner, should be devoted to a preparation for another life, by a vigilant introspection into our own hearts ; and submission of will to the Divine will, in all things !

The inward anatomy, that of the soul, and its passions, with the mental medicine, blessed be God, begins to gain a degree of ascendancy, never known before : and I humbly hope, for us both, shall end in triumphing over the natural, and corporeal, to which my endeavours have hitherto been too much devoted. I congratulate us, and these nations, that the experimental religion, amidst an almost unexampled depravity of manners, among priests, and people, is beginning to dawn ; I will say, in favour of the doctrine of immediate revelation, I never was so thoroughly convinced of it as in my late illness : never had so clear a sensation of a being, distinct from my own mind, immediately and instantaneously enlightening and enamouring my soul with the love of eternal truth and justice, as then : nor ever had I so complete victory over the peculiar inordinate affections of my mind as then : a time I cherish the remembrance of, with great delight, as having

shewed me the possibility of a complete victory over sin. I see now the necessity of deep mortification, as a proper discipline, penance, and even condition of our being admitted into the ocean of undisturbed happiness and glory.

Let me now observe, from the regard I have to thy bodily health, (who art also but lately immersed from the most imminent danger) that on the principle of self-preservation, and with very good effect, I practice great economy and care of the shattered bodily and mental fabric; avoiding inclemencies of weather, eating and drinking moderately, and sometimes fasting; reading, and writing less; and taking the air, on a favourable day, before dinner.

So wishing us to study peace and tranquillity of body and mind, I conclude thine affectionately.

LETTER IV.

2d Mo. 14th, 1756.

I NOW begin, with some degree of zeal and affection, and according to thy good resolution and exhortation, to adhere chiefly to subjects of a spiritual nature, and such as

may have a direct tendency to prepare for a better and happier state ; which it behooves us to have frequently in prospect, and to cultivate the *medicina mentis* more, and that of the body less : an anxious pursuit of business in the medical way is very unsuitable to our situation, on the borders of eternity. I have been greatly favoured of late with an opportunity of retiring to the country a night or two in a week, and thus have shaken off such a share of business as was burdensome, which some of the younger men get. I assure thee, I find no danger of over doing it in spirituals by such conduct ; for still natural and medical affairs are too apt to encroach : divers infirmities of mind still hang about me, and humble me, but are not indulged : on the other hand, a victory hath been obtained, in some considerable degree, to the glory of the goodness of that omnipresent, omnipotent, and gracious being, which is ever present with us !

In the way of reading, I choose rather to digest and apply, than read much : among the books that have lately fallen in my way, I much value some of those written by William Law ; but I fear this excellent man has a little blocked up his way by adhering so much to Jacob Behmen ; and as to his account of the

transactions of angels before the fall, I could wish he had never meddled with it. Thomas à Kempis is another writer of good estimation, especially for his treatise of *the following of Jesus Christ*.

Thus I have exhibited a small sample of a spiritual correspondence; and shall be glad to receive something of this kind from thee: but I desire thou mayest not conceive an opinion of me beyond my desert; I speak rather of my inclination than attainment. I am thy loving cousin and brother.

LETTER V.

11th Mo. 12th, 1756.

I take notice of thy recommendation of Isaac Pennington's writings, to which I am a stranger, but hope I shall not long be so. I lately received by a friend from America, the life of David Brainard, a missionary to the Indians; published at Boston in New England, 1749, being a spiritual diary, or narrative of observations on the state of his own soul. A sample of spiritual history, as much preferable to natural (in thy and my view) as soul is to body: the narrative is solid, weighty, and candid; he appears to have been divinely

qualified for the work ; and that he saved not only his own soul, but the souls of many others, awakening the dormant sparks of the divinity in them to a flame ! the same tendering power being witnessed as we hear of among ourselves ; and its efficacy demonstrated in a change of heart, affection, life, and conversation in the hearers. Great were the conflicts he underwent whilst struggling with his various weaknesses and sins ; yet a ray of divinity shines through these clouds ; and he grows brighter, clearer, and freer from these impediments as he advances towards eternity ; and manifesteth, at his approaching, solemn, slowly advancing dissolution, (such as thine and mine) clear and just conceptions of that temper which renders acceptable to God, and prepares for a happy translation !

I am desiring to hear from thee, at thy leisure, in this new language of Canaan, which we are beginning to learn in our old days.

LETTER VI.

6th Mo. 13th, 1757.

THE similarity of the dispensations of Providence towards us seems happily to have laid

a foundation for a spiritual correspondence, which I hope will be continued between us, as long as integrity of heart remains. I profess to thee renewedly, that afflicting hand did more for me by way of weaning from this world, and quickening my attention for another, than all outward arguments could have done: and I desire, that we may ever be preserved obsequious to the divine leadings in this respect! weaknesses and temptations still surround, but I humbly hope do not overwhelm.

I find no cause to retract what I have advanced, in my history of the rise and progress of friends in Ireland, against the Pope, as the grand antichrist and great corrupter of Christianity; and in tracing the steps and gradations of the apostacy, unto the midnight of darkness; giving some sketches of the emerging of the light of the reformation: which I am inclined to believe shall rise higher and higher, notwithstanding all discouragements. In this view I look upon the book of the Apocalypse, to be one of the most important of all the New Testament; for unless the dreadful apostacy and corruptions which have happened had been so foretold, and also a restitution foretold by the same authority,

our faith might have been shaken, which by this revelation is greatly strengthened and supported: at the same time it is our proper province to believe in the Supreme Providence, and humbly adore its impenetrable wisdom!

Thou wilt not suspect me of being visionary on occasions wherein I have censured other short-sighted honest men; but it looks to me as if our dear country was well nigh arrived to its *Ne plus ultra* as to dissoluteness of manners; and without the gift of prophecy, perhaps it may be said, there never was a period of time more teeming in great events: but I proceed no further on this subject; let us join with the church in her progress in coming up out of the wilderness; and in every instance of the restoration of primitive simplicity and purity!

LETTER VII.

12th Mo. 1st, 1759.

I ACKNOWLEDGE kindly thy account of the several editions of the bible among those called catholics; which book, where it is read, must undoubtedly represent Christianity in a very different light to the people

than that in which the priests have represented it. The downfall of the Jesuits in two kingdoms, I would hope bodes good : we have had of late, in this city, many converts openly renouncing popery ; notwithstanding this, I heartily concur with thee, that the greatest corruption of manners may be accompanied with the most orthodox opinions : on the other hand, though I have spoken thus of the Jesuits, I have lately met with a book wrote by one of this order, who seems to me to give evidences of a truly Christian spirit ; and under most heterodox opinions (which are the worship of saints, and transubstantiation) to maintain great purity of heart, and a lively zeal for the promotion of holiness : and moreover, under the present dreary times of great desolation within the narrow limits of our society, it gives me much comfort that God is here and there, awakening the same spirit of true Christian simplicity which animated our ancestors in the beginning ! and I am abundantly satisfied that many shall come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac.

In the mean time take the following short sketch of Zion in distress, and if thou canst send me any word of consolation. Here is

a large congregation, formerly accustomed to plentiful, and very frequent showers of the doctrine of the kingdom, in purity ; now by the death of those who were as the vehicles of it, left in a manner destitute of supplies of that kind : insomuch, that we who are left, are forced either to have recourse to the invisible fountain, at first hand, or to sit dry and parched : the latter, I fear, is the state of many ! some of these are going off, and other will go : however, at present, many of us hold together. In the midst of this, sometimes there starts up an *ignis fatuus*, boasting of superior light, but kindled, if I mistake not from below ; reproaching those who remain steady with this language, “ You are dumb, but I must not be so.” Thus provoking some tender ones, who dare not move without the proper qualification ; and, who having much work to do at home, are necessarily kept in that exercise, and hindered from going abroad.

I give thee a sad picture, but too true : had not some of us a supply of a little faith, and a little love, we had perished in this wilderness ! the consideration of the afflicted state of the church in ages past, and some glimmerings of the hope of the gospel, also bring a little support.

LETTER VIII.

1st Mo. 8th, 1761.

THY account of thy brother's death, and of my brother's state of health, are both instructive, and I acknowledge them as such.

As to the languishing state of Zion, I have of late suffered more sensibly than ever in my life before ; at times ready to be deserted by brethren I had an esteem for ; however, blessed be the Lord, I am not left quite disconsolate. Upon perusing the holy records, I find the church has generally been in trouble ; and often in more calamitous circumstances than any thou or I may have observed, and yet was never wholly forsaken : the prophets will furnish thee with numerous instances, which have yielded me considerable satisfaction. That we may be preserved from a participation in the general defection and corruption, is the great spiritual object. But again, I consider we are perhaps more alarmed at these things than we ought to be, in expecting too much from exteriors, by a conformity to our refined way ; which really can effect no more than circumcision to the Jew outward.

Thy mentioning a certain writer, suggests an observation of the too much prevailing neglect of reading the holy scriptures, even among some of our ministers ; I am far from denying, on the contrary, I commend the imploring divine help ; but at the same time we ought to be diligent in the perusal of these sacred records ; comparing the frequent references and connexions of the Old and New Testament. I need not tell thee that our chapters are, not unfrequently, badly divided, which if not attended to might prevent our having a right understanding of what is before us.

Let reason be exercised ; not to pride and ostentation of science, but as God's precious gift : and let no man of superior talents and opportunities, cover his spiritual idleness, under a specious claim to divine inspiration.

LETTER IX.

5th Mo. 30th, 1761.

THY observation of the preference of a suffering state to that of being at ease in Zion, ministers some comfort to one who knows himself to be one of the least of many brethren.

Shall I mention to thee, in a summary way, the use I have made of my late reading of the scriptures, after many and long omissions of this exercise, whilst busy on natural subjects, with an honest view to the promotion of useful knowledge, morality, and temporals, which were set up above evangelical righteousness; faith, and a view to another and better world, being in a great measure absorbed. At length did a gracious Providence lead, and as it were allure me to reading these sacred writings; and now I have a far greater veneration for them than I had before, not only as setting forth the majesty of Christ Jesus, but I have found them to be a seasonable support to my faith, in reference to the woful apostacy overspreading the Christian churches, clearly foretold; and the coming out of it pointed at! May thou and I be ranked among them that are coming out, although in some sort with the witnesses that prophesied in sack-cloth!

The prophet Jeremiah was a man of sorrows, raised up in the midst of an apostatizing, idolatrous people; faithful and constant under the severest trials, he manifested God's prescience in the accomplishment of events more remote, and in those concerning the gospel

day, and new covenant. May a degree of his faithfulness attend thee, and me, under the present sad state of the society : although we be no prophets, faithful witnesses we may be.

This prophet has furnished me with a conviction of the harmony, and connexion there is between the Old and New Testament writers, besides other instructive lessons.

Having thus given thee some hints of my experience in spiritual concerns as the most important, I now descend to temporals.

LETTER X.

12th Mo. 11th, 1762.

THUS retired, I sit down to discharge my arrear to thee : and first shall say, I join thee in discouraging an universal charge upon some of our modern reformers, as if, by mistaken notions of Christ's righteousness, they encouraged a persisting in immoral lives ; for from a personal knowledge of some of them, I have the charity to think that their faith is a living operative one, and such as hath produced an entire change in their manners. Give me leave further to say, in their behalf, that a mere dry morality, little better

than that of the heathens, has been the general language of the pulpits: the revival of the doctrine of faith in a Christ, both external and internal, seems to me to be doing notable service to the drooping cause of Christianity. Bad men, under the Christian name, may profess belief in Christ, and his doctrine; but I profess to thee, I do not think they really believe in them; but that unbelief is, in a great measure, the true source of their wickedness. Give a man a due share of faith and love, and I will warrant for his obedience. Legal men, among us, have cried, Do this, and avoid that, in order that thou mayest be accepted; but, if I mistake not, God is teaching some better, and enabling them to lay the axe to the root of the tree. Come to meetings, says the pharisee; but love God, says the evangelical man, and I will warrant for the consequence; but he also saith, put away thy idols first.

As to our spiritual state here, as a people signally called out of the world, it is truly poor and languishing: we have indeed been favoured lately with an instance of divine mercy, in a visit from the brethren, in consequence of a recommendation of the yearly meeting; and as far as I have been a witness

to the conducting of this visit, it has been with an honest zeal, love, and Christian prudence ; and I humbly hope, that the word spoken will not return void.

But to conclude and take a review of our analagous spiritual circumstances. As we have both heard God's alarming voice, in restoring us from the jaws of death, and taking or being about to take our elder brother a little before us, (and we are riding post on the same road,) let us prepare to meet the bridegroom ; and trim our lamps, in higher degrees of love and zeal for his cause on earth : being loosened from every worldly attachment how specious soever ; that we may be ready to enter the chamber.

LETTER XI.

10th Mo. 6th, 1763.

AS to our religious state in this place, as a society, great is the desolation ! and the awful seat of an elder is fallen to my lot. But amidst all our backslidings, a gracious providence has been extended in divers truly acceptable visits of ministers, and especially by the national visit ; which has had a tendency to improve and establish our discipline ;

whilst it has shaken certain lifeless forms which did more hurt than good.

I would gladly hope Providence is watching over us for good, in putting it into the hearts of some to form a plan for erecting public schools for educating our youth in a manner entirely select, and separate from those of other societies (though here we are but poor, in comparison with you); and if thou knowest of any public spirited friend, who has money to spare, and would send over ten, twenty, fifty, or an hundred pounds for this purpose, I would be answerable for the application to the valuable end of preserving, and saving some individuals, who without this means would be lost: for we see the children of those who embrace this way, are running with a rapid career into the world again; some of whom, by this holy policy, with the co-operation of the divine blessing, might be preserved.

In conclusion, I would remark, that the exercise of a wholesome Christian discipline lies heavy on the shoulders of a few; although absolutely necessary to preserve the society from open contempt.

LETTER XII.

5th Mo. 8th, 1773.

I HOPE thou wilt excuse my delay of acknowledging the receipt of thine, when thou shalt have heard how it has been with me.

It is now above a year and a half ago that I was seized with a paralytic stroke on my right side, and in my tongue, although not to the highest degree, nor my senses impaired; but by the indulgence of Providence I have so far slowly recovered my limbs as to be able to walk a mile without resting; the use of my tongue is also in a great measure restored. Now, reckoning my seventy-fifth year, I commence a downright old man. I am, however, very thankful, and possess my mind with great tranquillity in this happy exemption from the anxiety and cares attending practice; and for the opportunity it gives me to revise, correct, and improve former labours.

I would gladly, at a proper opportunity, be informed of your spiritual state; as to us, in this city, a day of trial now attends us, being as to ministerial help, in a manner, wholly stripped: it is true, some attempts have been made by intruders, but these have been silenc-

ed ; although for my part, I would be far from stopping the mouth of the least babe.

Amidst all discouragements in a human way, faith comes in to our aid, even trust in God, who hath often brought forth events beyond all human comprehension. Some convincements, are an instance to this purpose, and the children of unpromising parents raised up to eminent service.

LETTER XIII.

11th Mo. 20th, 1750.

IN Dublin I received a letter from thee. I rejoice in this, that the Lord of heaven and earth is visiting by his truth, and working by his power, to beget into his heavenly family; and bless his people with that which conveys all the happiness mankind ever did, or ever can taste ! too many are insensible of it ; others too careless to be religious as they ought ; but it is our interest to pursue our own peace, and transmit to others examples. It is an excellent thing to be true subjects of Christ's kingdom, baptized into his nature, and therein to abide. Great has been his mercy in visiting our souls with his blessed truth, and it highly behooves us to watch with all diligence. It is our duty

to look to him daily; this comprehends all; here is our strength, and safety; other stays or temporary help will fail, and leave us destitute, and inwardly lean: oh! therefore remember often the dew of thy youth, the tenderness of thy heart when first met with; cherish in thy soul the fresh instance of regard, and be it thy care inwardly to look, and live to the Lord, so shall thy hands be made strong, and thy head be kept above the water.

There is a spirit that is gone forth into the camp, and is splendidly delusive; it delights in good words, and feeds upon them; it cries out help, help, but principally to the servants, not the master; this spirit leads into notions, it snuffs up the wind, and lives in commotions itself raises; all that are led by it are superficial, and know nothing, and must lie down in sorrow. That holy spirit which was and is the ground of truth for ever: (which I trust has reached thy heart) is a substantial operative principle; its directions are not imaginary, nor its doctrines loose and indeterminate; but it is life and light to its possessors, and causes them to inherit substance; it teaches access in heart to God, whose attributes cannot be defined fully, but experience teaches them; supplying their wants, supporting their

steps, opening their understanding into those divine truths that are higher than human wisdom, let the spirit be leaned upon above all; this will help us to stand upright, and walk steadily in the faith delivered to the saints: retirement will be pleasant in meetings, and out of meetings; the inward feelings of the divine power to live and act to God's honour and our own preservation will be dear and precious to us; and he that delights to hear the language of his children will not be slack in the performance of his gracious promises; I found the free salutation of gospel love in my heart to thee, and earnestly intreat thee to abide stedfast in the truth; feel after it, live in it, hope for its salvation, and it will never fail. I salute thee in the love, and affection of Christ our holy and blessed helper, and remain thy faithful friend.

LETTER XIV.

UNDER a renewed sense of that love and life which hath ever been the preservation and support of the Lord's children as they have kept near unto it, hath my mind been nearly united in tender love and sympathy to some of my dear friends at Sheffield; whose minds have been sensibly wrought upon by the renewed

operations of the Lord's forming hand of power, to prepare them as vessels for his own use, particularly those few who are lately come forth in the ministry.

Dear friends ; who have thus been pointed out by the great Sheperd of Israel, and brought into the school of Christ, to be trained up under his hand and eye, that you might thereby come to be prepared to do the Lord's work and go his errands, after you had in some measure improved the gifts and talents of grace, which he had in mercy bestowed upon you, in order for your salvation and redemption.

You received an additional gift, which was begotten in you, and under which you travelled many times in tenderness of spirit ; and were often deeply baptized into a feeling sense of what was likely to be brought forth, and many were the pangs, and deep searchings of heart that you experienced, until he that had brought to the birth, gave strength to bring forth ; which was done without your skill, or contrivance for it was the Lord's doings, and it was marvellous in our eyes ; so that you are somewhat like that servant who had received two talents to improve : and this calls for greater vigilance, circumspection, and care, than he

that had received only one talent; that you may have to say, be ye followers of us, as ye see we follow Christ; and as your gifts were not of your own procuring, but according to the good pleasure of him who hath the government of his church upon his own shoulders, he saw meet to intrust you with them, that they might be occupied to the glory of his great name; but as they were not of your own procuring so neither are they at your own command, but must be waited for in deep humility of mind, in order to come at a right knowledge of when to speak and when to be silent; and there need not be much anxiety about it, if the mind is kept in a watchful state, and careful that nothing, through our unwatchfulness or neglect, deprive us of the sense of our gifts; but those who are thus brought forth, may have in their infant state, (as well as those that are further grown in experience,) many trying proving dispensations to pass through; for the dragon, that withstood the woman in order to devour her man-child, as soon as it was born, will withstand them; and try them many ways, that he may warp them aside from the holy commandments delivered to them; and these are sometimes carried to a place prepared for them, as in

the wilderness; where they are secretly fed, and sustained, though their gifts may be hid as in obscurity for a season; in which trying time there is much need of patience, that there is not an attempting to come forth from the wilderness before the right time, ere the floods be subsided which the dragon cast out of his mouth, and so be in danger of being carried away with them. For it may not be one of the least of his temptations, when it may please the Lord to hide our gifts, for a trial of the love, faith, and patience of his servants, and for the better qualifying them to know their proper seasons, to endeavour to draw them out, though the clouds may not be taken off the tabernacle, and so lead them into confusion; and their offering, not being seasoned with the salt of the everlasting covenant, it hath not a right savour, nor is attended with a right evidence; and when he hath effected this, and the mind comes to be made sensible of it, (either by the gentle admonitions of some sensible feeling friends, or by the light of truth, or both,) manifesting their mis-stepings, then his next work is, if not carefully watched against, to persuade the poor creatures, that they are upon a wrong foundation, having been running when the Lord never sent them; and

they see that their offerings are not accepted, and are so led into reasoning and consultations with flesh and blood, thereby to lose their strength by hearkening to the voice of the enemy ; and it is to be feared that some have been led into a wilderness, out of which they have never more found their way : there are also other ways that he works with some, by endeavouring to persuade them, that their gifts and capacities are so small, and weak, that it is never likely they should be of any use : by which means some have been discouraged, not considering, that it is out of the mouths of babes and sucklings the Lord ordaineth praise ; and that he hath chosen the weak and foolish things of this world, to confound the wise and strong. But dear friends, wait daily to feel after the life and power of truth to gather and settle your minds, under a sense of its holy influence ; and never move but under the necessity, and in the openings of truth ; remember that Aaron, our great type, under the law, was never permitted to approach to minister before the Lord, until he was renewedly clothed with the hallowed garment, on which were placed both the bells and pomegranates ; which testify both sound and sub-

stance, or nourishment; and it will tend to your safety not to make additions to the openings of truth on your minds; but if there should be only a few sentences that are required, be content; remember that under the law, when they offered according to their abilities, those that could only offer a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, were accepted as well as those that offered their bullocks and rams; and, as you keep in the simplicity, and near to your gifts, you will in due time witness an increase, if the Lord see meet.

As these things seemed to spring in my mind with a degree of gospel love, I have in the same love communicated them, earnestly desiring your establishment and growth on the everlasting foundation; for the harvest truly is plenteous, but the faithful labourers are few: though I am far separated from you, yet in that which neither length of time, nor distance of place, can diminish, I often remember you, and these will serve as a pledge of my regard, who remain your affectionate friend.

LETTER XV.

5th Mo. 19th, 1758.

WHEN I consider the good company you have providentially been favoured with, and the advantageous situation you are at present happy in, it would seem unnecessary to offer any thing by way of caution, or counsel, respecting your conduct, whilst in this kingdom: but though you are thus agreeably seated, I take it for granted, in the course of your stay, you will make some excursions from the place of your present abode, to different parts of the kingdom, which must necessarily subject you to variety of company; in this case I do not apprehend the worthy friend, in whose house you lodge, will be deficient in giving you the necessary advice, for your benefit; yet I do not find this will excuse me from offering to your consideration a few cautions, respecting one very material part of moral and religious conduct in life, which is the choice of company. The saying of the apostle Paul will always remain true, “ That evil communications corrupt good manners.” The experience of many ages has confirmed it: it is also truly said, a man

is known by his company ; and that, as his friend, so is he.

Bad company, or vicious examples, are often hurtful to men of years, and sometimes to those who had formerly been experienced in good, when they come to be thus exposed; but youth is more especially a dangerous period of life, in which we are more liable to embrace things that are inconvenient, as well as unlawful, and to be drawn aside by the various temptations, crafty allurements, and unprofitable friendships of the world. And I know of no place on earth, where incitements to ungodliness and vanity more abound than in this kingdom in general, and in this city in particular.

I make this observation as a hint to you, to retire into your own minds, and consider how necessary it will be to your good, and well being, that you avoid the conversation of men of corrupt minds, who you will soon know by their fruits ; whose snares and temptations will steal as insensibly into the affections, as the venom of a serpent creeps into the veins of the subject it has wounded : therefore I advise you against making such men your intimates and familiars.

I have sometimes thought, that vicious examples have the same effect upon the soul, at least the affections of it, that deformed bodies have at the first view of them; they excite an unpleasant painful idea, but, by customary and familiar converse, the disagreeable sensation ceases, and we become quite easy, and reconciled to them: thus vice, in the first appearance affects a tender innocent mind with horror and dread; but being hardened by custom, and habit, the painful impression gradually wears off, and it becomes more easy, and perhaps agreeable; and then the next step is to embrace it.

I would not have it understood as if I thought you would chuse to frequent the company of men of apparent dissolute lives and practices, who are not afraid to glory in their shame; but I would caution against associating with the more hidden and secret foes of Christianity (such young men as outwardly profess the blessed truth, but hold it in an unrighteous conversation, at clubs, and night-revels, frequenting places of public diversion, invented by the imagination of sinful men, some of whom, we have reason to fear, deny or at least call in question, the sacred truths of the Christian religion); from such men, though they

may call themselves brethren, I counsel you to turn away ; and, as virtue and piety, as well as vice and folly, are communicated by example, I desire you will take every suitable opportunity of having the company of solidly religious persons of our own society.

But as it is not sufficient, that we only observe the negative part of our duty, in abstaining from evil, if we desire to be perfect, we must learn to do well. Though the man is blessed who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, yet he is not fully so, till he is found delighting in the law of the Lord after the inner man ; meditating therein day and night, observing to do according to all that is written therein.

Then these blessed effects will follow, that he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, which bringeth forth its fruit in due season. And, if this holy exercise of mind is continued, he shall receive of the sap and nourishment from the Fountain of Life, so that his leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever he doth shall prosper : “ The steps of a good
 “ man are ordered of the Lord ; the law of
 “ his God is in his heart, none of his goings
 “ shall slide : ” in order therefore to the per-

formance of our duty, it is necessary we should acquaint ourselves with God, and seek to know his will concerning us, by believing in, and adhering to the good principle we profess, of the light of Christ in our consciences ; it is this alone can give us the saving knowledge of God ; and as we are obedient to its teachings, we shall not only deny ungodliness, but by living a godly life in all holy conversation, manifest we are loving God above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves.—And if the delight and joy proceeding from love to God, and an evidence of his love to us, be the only true and real happiness of mankind, it necessarily follows, that the sooner we are come to the possession of this inestimable blessing, the happier it will be for us ! I am one, who have to lament, that I forsook my own mercies, in that I did not remember my Creator in the days of my youth ; that I neglected to acquaint myself with God in my younger years, knowing that an early sacrifice, and devotion of heart is acceptable to him : I have considered how many years I lost in unprofitable pursuits, delighting in things I am now ashamed of : many precious moments I might have enjoyed had I been so wise as to have enquired wherein true happiness consisted : I have

never heard of any who thought they had sought God too soon; but many mourn, that they knew him too late.

But to return to what chiefly affected my mind, and has drawn from me these cautions, viz. the consideration of the temptations persons are exposed to, in the time of youth, (though in no part of our lives we can be said to be in a state of security free from the attempts of the enemy of souls, and therefore a state of watchfulness is necessary to all ages and conditions) it appears to me, that there is more than ordinary occasion for circumspection when men are beset with enemies from all quarters, as is eminently the case in this great city: things, men, and books, as it were, lie in wait to deceive, and cheat people of true happiness: with regard to books, if a vain curiosity should be indulged in reading many publications of the present time, whose chief tendency is to promote an undue liberty from the restraints of religion; the knowledge acquired by such reading is evil, and will, by the unsound principles and erroneous doctrine, of one sort, and the profanity, and licentiousness of the other, bring death to the soul; as they will prevent the true knowledge of God from taking place in

the heart, and hinder the growth of the seed of immortal life, by which the soul is raised from earthly to divine and heavenly objects.

I write from a degree of my own experience of the hurt received by means of such writings, and am the more earnest with you, as you value your peace, to avoid the perusal of them, as they can administer no real benefit, but on the contrary certain evil.

Having thus enlarged my letter, beyond expectation, I shall only add, that as you profess no less than the blessed truth, as it is in Jesus, may you, by its divine assistance, and obedience to its holy dictates be made and kept perfectly free from the entanglements of a vain and sinful world, and be enabled to hold fast the profession of your faith in a good conscience without wavering; keep near to the testimony of Jesus, the sure word of prophecy in your hearts; whereby you will be able to resist and quench all the fiery darts of satan, and his agents.

To God I recommend you, and the word of his grace, which is able to strengthen and build you up in the most holy faith, and remain your sincere friend.

Sophia Hume

LETTER XVI.

IT came before me this morning, with some degree of sweetness to visit you with a line of caution, and encouragement, in the pure and unfeigned love of the gospel of Christ: to you, the professors of it, my dear youth, to remind you, who are capable of reflection, of the great goodness of our God, in visiting you with his salvation, and affording you the blessed privilege of the knowledge of his unspotted truth, not only through the teaching and instruction of his blessed spirit; but you enjoy the advantage of sitting under the doctrine of his called, chosen, and anointed ministers, whose lips preserve knowledge, rendered convincing by the strongest argument and proof of faith in Christ, viz. such an example and conversation as becomes the gospel. You have this help in a double capacity, as well from the ministry as in those you are so happy to call father and mother, who I make no doubt use their endeavours to bring you up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This is a blessing I once had an opportunity of improving to my eternal advantage, from the instruction and admonition of my dear mother,

who endeavoured to instil principles of the doctrine of Christianity, to wit, the indispensable duty of self-denial, without which we can in no wise lay claim to that glorious title of being followers of the blessed son of God, who came to lay self low; to lay the axe of his power to the corrupt root, from whence proceeds pride, evil thoughts, which when conceived, and joined with, bring forth sin. Pride is a sin productive (as I have thought) of every other evil; having observed that where pride is suffered to predominate, there we see every evil work; pride excited me to pursue worldly wisdom, and knowledge; pride put me upon endeavouring after what the world call accomplishments: pride taught me to emulate any that was superior in pomp, state, or equipage: pride taught me to deck and adorn my person, to be nice and curious in my apparl, to carry my person delicately, and walk with mincing steps, and outstretched neck: pride taught me to be cautious lest I should have burning instead of beauty, and and put me upon wanting washes to improve my complexion. Pride taught me the genteel carriage, the foolish jesting, the false cheerfulness (a name now given to laughter, wantonness, and foolish jesting): pride led me

to read unedifying and pernicious books ; to sing songs, to please myself as well as others : in a word, pride led me to desire the lust of the eye, and pomp of life.

I know not that what I have mentioned is any of your weaknesses ; but this I know, that childhood and youth are vanity : not from a propensity or principle instilled, or given them, by the wise Creator ; but the enemy hath done this, or by his agents, sown evil seeds of pride. For though our parents may give us Christian advice, and example, (as was my case) we are surrounded by evil examples.

My mother was but one, and so I despised her admonition, and followed the multitude to do evil.

But now it comes before me to mention the goodness of Israel's God : whose tender mercy is over all his works, and will leave all without excuses, and therefore affords all a day of merciful visitation, in which he manifests his blessed will, and what he requires of us. He would have made my dear mother an instrument in his hand of turning me from darkness unto light ! but I would have none of her self-denying counsel, and cast her words

(which I have since thought were from the Lord) behind my back.

And now I will tell you what I suffered in my very youthful days, in the refusal of the Lord's kindness to my soul; he was pleased to visit me with sore and distressing sickness, which all about me, as well as myself, thought would be unto death; and in this trying season, when not only all my delights forsook me, but the wrath of God was revealed against all unrighteousness, and my sins set in order before my face; the veil of obduracy with which the God of this world had blinded my spiritual eye, was rent; I saw my guilt, and was greatly condemned in rejecting my dear parents admonition: but upon promises of amendment, the Lord was so merciful as to spare my life, and restore me to my usual good state of health.

But let me ever lament what followed; that after this I should turn again to folly.

Yet, (for ever renowned and blessed be the name of our God) after a series of years, he was pleased eminently to visit with his love and offers of grace, and reconciliation; upon the condition, that if I forsook the foolish, I should live: observe, this was the second

visitation of God's love and glory: who assisted me by his grace to be obedient to the heavenly vision. He let me not only see him the dread, but beauty of nations.

Then I was ashamed in my own sight, when I saw his purity: I could not delight to adorn my body, when I saw the nakedness of my soul, I left caring immoderately for the body, and was made willing in the day of God's power to be stript of my delights, that I might be clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

And as I gave up to the divine discoveries, and present manifestations, the reward of the Lord attended my obedience to his will, even that peace, which all the enjoyments of this life never did, nor never could afford; being all as dross and dung in comparison of this transcendent enjoyment, this approbation of God.

Dear children! I believe you know the truth, but this will not do for us, unless we obey the dictates thereof: it will do us no service to hear Christ preached, and set forth crucified before our view, unless that, as he died for sin, we also come to die to sin of all kind.

Be sober and watch unto prayer, that the enemy sow not his tares, and choak the

good seed of the kingdom, and deprive you of the blessed privileges with which you are favoured. As obedient children, fashion not yourselves according to the lusts and vanities of the world: look not out at others, who may profess with you, but look continually to him, who is able (as you are willing) to keep you from the spots of the world. Remember if any love the world, the love of God abides not in him: they cannot subsist together; what nourishes the one, destroys the other. Therefore as an evidence we are risen with Christ from the earth, or earthly things: the apostle tells, our affections will be set on heavenly things, or things above, for where our treasure is, as our dear Lord says, our hearts will be also.

Now my desire for you is, that you may be endued with divine wisdom to chuse the better part; not to cumber yourselves, as you advance in years, too much in serving the body; but may part with all that stands in your way, to purchase the pearl of price. I can declare to you, that with all my gettings, for which I been so anxiously concerned, I never got peace, till I sold all to make this purchase: and as I am careful to keep what is committed to me, I rely on the gracious promises of our

God, that it will accompany me beyond the grave, and not me only, but all who love, and obey, the appearance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! to whose blessed teachings I leave you, dear children, and remain your true friend.

Sophia Hume

LETTER XVII.

1st Mo. 24th, 1758.

I RECEIVED thy last letter just as I had engaged to accompany a friend to two adjacent country meetings, and therefore could give it but a cursory reading: but after some days interruption, upon giving it a second review, my heart was comfortably affected, and mine eye filled with tears of joy! as my faith is further strengthened and confirmed, that tho' thou art cast down, the Lord has not left nor forsaken thee, neither will he leave thee to the will of thine enemy, though he is suffered to try thee in a near manner: he shall not prevail against thee as thou keeps the faith, though small as a grain of mustard seed, by this thou wilt be enabled to resist, and be made more than conqueror: for I believe the Lord of compassion will increase it, as thou improves the small degree, so that it will work

powerfully in thy soul by love unfeigned, to the thorough refining of body, soul, and spirit; to the bringing into subjection, and putting all things under his feet, whose right it is to reign sovereign in our hearts.

I know this work will so reduce our spirits that we shall indeed be willing to become spectacles to the world, to angels, and to men, even a derision to those who are called by the name of the Lord; who nevertheless are eating their own bread, and wearing their own apparel, gratifying their sensual appetites in whatever their souls lust after. As this is the lamentable state of many in our society, I plainly see the faithful in Israel are, and will be engaged to call louder than ever, and in a more conspicuous manner to bear witness to the truth, as it really is, in the humble and lowly Jesus.

The Lord is working in a secret manner, in the hearts of some of his servants: who are ready to question, why it is thus with me? why is it necessary that I should be so reduced, and clothed with so great a degree of humility, and self-denial? it is in order not only that we may be ensamples to the flock, and properly prepared and qualified to take the oversight thereof; but this work of the Lord (which in the eyes of some is marvellous),

is further to disentangle our affections from all visibles, and that we may serve him without distraction; and come up more fully to the help of the Lord, in his great work, which he has put on the wheels; which are clogged at present, for want of skilful, able, and clean hands to set them in motion.

Therefore, as thou art one of those whom the Lord hath chosen and appointed, to repair the breaches in the walls of our Zion; keep, as much as possible, in a watching, waiting posture; as thou knows not how soon thy Lord will return and say, it is enough! release thee from thy prison house, and reinstate thee in thy office: I believe a renewed call will go forth to the willing-hearted in Israel, to such as are willing to be renewed in the spirit of their minds by deep baptism: to these, I believe, there will be a renewed call to visit the seed (which to our sorrow is the least of all seeds) in prison, in families; for in our assemblies too many are unwilling to come under the baptizing power of truth, will not touch the burden of the Lord, as declared by his servants, with one of their fingers; but are laying it on the shoulders of their neighbour, saying, this is applicable to such or such. Some are preparing, by the

hand of our God, to be as saviours on Mount Sion ! by divers ways, is God working to restore our poor society to its primitive allegiance ; some will be again called to search the camp, not only family by family, but the husband apart, and the wife apart, the son apart, and the daughter apart, and in the authority of truth will be enabled to say, Thou art the man. When thou therefore feels the call renewed to minister, publicly or privately, do not make excuse, and say, I am not yet fit, I am of unclean lips, for God can suddenly change ! in the twinkling of an eye the corruptible have been helped to put on incorruption, and the mortal immortality ; and the saying has been triumphantly witnessed, " O Death, where is thy sting ? O Grave, where is thy victory ? Blessed be our God, who giveth us the victory ! such a sudden, and happy change has been known in a meeting, when the party has gone for a long time, without witnessing what had been earnestly panted after. Remember, if the Lord call again to that service, he either sees thee fit, or will make thee so as thou abides his preparing hand. And also if the Lord call thee not to an outward abstinence, eat then thy natural bread, though it be mingled with tears :

and do no strengthen the bands of the enemy, by weakening thy body, through an improper abstinence from thy temporal food. Receive likewise with humble gratitude, that portion of spiritual sustenance, which, I am sure, the Lord is daily administering to thee, till he is pleased to feed thee more plentifully with the dainties ! which sometimes are withheld, till we have girded ourselves, and served our Lord, and then he is pleased that we should eat and drink ; it being, in the mean time, our meat and drink to do his will. And now my friend, I would wish thee to bear in mind the inexpressible favour of our God : who affords light to see thy wants, and strength to cry mightily to him for relief : in such a state, my soul has been bowed, and made to worship at his footstool ; in that, he vouchsafed the sense of want, and ability to beg a supply, and humbly to wait till he saw meet to answer : I since knew this ability could be no less than the favour of God, and the way to the Father ; to whom no man can come unless drawn by the spirit of his son Jesus Christ.

Well then, my dear friend, be not cast down above measure, since so many favourable circumstances attend thee : bear in mind the blessing annexed to such as endure suffer-

ing, and temptation: among many which I have experienced, that of declining an attendance on the worship of the Supreme Being, has been often laid in my way by the suggestion of the enemy, to lead me further out of the way of my duty, and by persuading me to add one error to another, make the return more difficult, first tempting, and then upbraiding with the temptation. But I have considered that however circumstanced our minds may be, it is no reasonable excuse for declining the attendance of meetings; if they want to be rectified and stayed, the greater need of presenting our bodies in the place of outward gathering, to put ourselves in the way, with our brethern, of being inwardly gathered to the shiloh of our God; who, in his mercy, may remember our low estate of poverty, and may prepare an offering in our spirits; a living sacrifice, acceptable to himself: I say, who knows but this may be the case: therefore let us not give way to the enemy, instead of relieving the malady by absenting ourselves from the place appointed for religious worship, we shall but increase it, and lead into a greater degree of darkness: as I was helped to persist in the way of duty in this respect, I was sometimes favoured with a glimpse of

that countenance, which is more precious and desirable to a few, than the increase of any worldly treasure. And now I am speaking of temptations, I would beseech thee, when the enemy presents objects of thought which thy soul ever abhorred, do not stop to reason with flesh and blood, or dispute with the tempter, nor, as I have too much done, dwell upon and brood over the temptation: for when I did, the more frequently, and with greater strength, were his assaults renewed; terrifying my spirit, and affecting me with horror and confusion; and would have persuaded me, I had joined the temptation, and committed the sins I even should have abhorred, when I was, almost, his vassal, and taken captive at his will. But let me not here forget to commemorate the mercies of our God; who would frequently interpose, and bring many comfortable scriptures to my view, and, with them, this encouraging reflection, that it was no sin to be tempted; and notwithstanding the charge of the adversary against me, that I had admitted him, in this or the other presentation, the Lord was pleased to encourage me still to resist, by letting me see, though he had approached as far as the door, he had not gained an entrance; and even the door-

posts should be sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb, which was slain from the foundation of the world, for returning repenting prodigals.—At length, I was mercifully instructed, and helped to pass by the temptation or presentation without much notice, deliberation, or consideration about it, but to depend wholly on the mercy of God, and look only to him for salvation in the hour and power of darkness: since which, his temptations have not been so frequent, nor his presentations so terrifying. Nevertheless, to be wholly exempt from trials and besetments of this sort, is what we are by on means to expect; whilst our spirits are connected with these bodies, and we remain in a state of probation, it must be so: and according to the nature of the two kingdoms of Christ and Anti-Christ, a continual warfare must be maintained against the invasions of the power of darkness: which, that thou and I may be enabled to do, is the earnest petition of my spirit.

To explain a little what I meant by the sin unto death; I apprehend, it is of that sort, or nature, that the apostle John signifies, is not to be prayed for; and is the state of one who hath made shipwreck of faith, and a good conscience; who not only rebels against the

Spirit of Christ, but sins wilfully and stubbornly; saying, as the Israelites did of old, when arrived to a high pitch of obduracy, We will do so, and so: we will bake cakes, burn incense, and even pour out drink-offerings, to the queen of heaven! We will not hear, said they, when the Lord spake to them in their prosperity; and as for the words, which the prophets spake to them, in the name of the Lord, they say, We will not hearken unto them; but will certainly do whatsoever goeth out of our mouth; in such a case as this, people are passing on, adding sin to sin, till they arrive at a state, in which the Lord, in his justice, leaves them to their own delusions.

But, my dear friend, the Lord hath not thus dealt with thee and me; because, he that is omniscient, saw and sees our sliding aside; our wandering a little out of the way, was not the effect of stubbornness, nor had we offended willingly, but through inadvertency and unwatchfulness: in this situation, if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, even Christ Jesus the righteous; a blessed, and glorious privilege! also prayers and intercessions are made by the brethren, to the throne of grace according to the will of

God : an humbling and comfortable reflection, that we were not dead in trespasses : but we feel remorse for the same, and are saying, in deep contrition of soul, to us belong blushing and confusion of face : but blessed be our God, to him belongs mercy and forgiveness ; as he himself declares, when the sinner forsakes his evil ways, with a full purpose of heart to cleave close to him, he will give us our daily spiritual bread.

I say, in the midst of the multitude of my affliction, and perplexing thoughts, this was a comfort, that my disobedience was not wilful. Yet so sensible was I that I must be again redeemed through judgment, that I was made willing not only to kiss the rod, but to desire to be fed with it. I rejoiced to feel the chastising hand of our gracious Father, which was both rod and staff, as it afforded me comfortable hopes of a future inheritance, and that I was not cut off as illegitimate : but that after I had suffered according to the will of God, he might again restore me to a place in his house ; if not yet as a son to sit at his table, and partake of his dainties, at least as a hired servant, to receive food convenient and sufficient for me : for if we are but favoured to be admitted into his house, and service, it

is enough, the lowest seat and meanest office is worth all we can do and suffer to obtain it.

Sophia Hume

LETTER XVIII.

IN the fellowship of true and unfeigned love, that unites the hearts of the faithful in a joint communion one with another, do I dearly salute thee; even that communion which begets a sympathy in spirit, so as to partake, in some degree, of the state of each other, as members of one body, in the mystery that the world knows not of: for by this communion the members are not insensible of the state one of another, that if one member suffers, the others suffer with it; and if one rejoice, or abound, the rest are rejoiced by a degree of the same abounding love. Thus help is communicated without partiality, according to the proportion of that love that is boundless, proceeding from God, through Jesus Christ, and centering in the same eternal oneness.

If I may be so qualified as to be helpful to thee in this, it will give me great pleasure: and judging also that I have had experience of various states and conditions in a Christian

life, and the manner of dealing of the Lord with his people, I have learned in the deeps, and in the silence of all fleshly reasoning, in the stillness and quiet, where the enemy approaches not, to cry out, in admiration, with the prophet, How unsearchable are thy judgments, O Lord, and thy ways, past finding out! yet there is often a long time of suffering in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and distress, before we can come here, to stillness; to the intent that God Almighty, out of his infinite wisdom, may manifest his own arm of power, and bring deliverance, sometimes without any means of our own proposing. For I have often observed, that he reserves entirely to himself the greatest deliverance: yet not always so, as not to make use of any means at all; but those means appear, on a just view, to have something in them so extraordinary and providential, as shews them to be the effect of the first moving cause: the instrument is in some sort overlooked, though it is in sincerity acknowledged as the bounty of heaven in the dispensation of his Providence; yet the acknowledgment does not terminate in the means or instrument, but arises in pure breathings as a divine flame to the source and fountain of all mercies. Thus

his judgments are to human attainments, unsearchable, and his ways, though ways that lead to peace, past finding out: when he corrects in his judgments, it is not in sore displeasure, lest he should bring us to nothing: but by the chastisements, as of a most merciful Father, he urges and draws a greater degree of obedience from his children, for it is in love. Our time then is to be still, to bear all things, to endure all things, to rejoice in all things that he shall lay upon us, as knowing that thereby we may procure to ourselves, the most lasting peace, by being restored again to his favour. And, O how happy are all those that can so quietly submit in all things! In order thereunto, let us, consider that they are distributed to mankind in his abundant wisdom and counsel.

But there is another sort of affliction, that is as bonds and imprisonments, as lying nights and days in the deeps; more afflicting than bonds outwardly, and the cause entirely hid from us; wherein there is striving between life and death, between hope and despair; longing to be delivered, with short glimpses of, if at all beholding, the deliverer! at times crying out with the prophet, "Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayers

“ should not past through.” There appears no mediator, no high-priest before the throne of God. He for ever seems to hide his blessed countenance, and his absence is our greatest pain, for being deprived of his presence all things else yield no relief. O then how does the soul tremble ! how does the heart faint ! the tears are dried up ; no vent then seems to ease the anguish of the soul.

We are ready to say, with Job, “ O that
 “ my griefs were thoroughly weighed, and
 “ my calamities put in the balance together, for
 “ then would it appear heavier than the sand
 “ of the sea, therefore my words are swallow-
 “ ed up.”

O that I could feel so much softness in my heart, as might affect mine eyes, then should I have hope ! if it were the effect of contrition, or consolation, it would yield me equal joy, that my Redeemer had not quite forsaken me, nor given me up to the rage of my most cruel enemy, but still hath mercy for me in store. Thus lamenting days and nights ; when it is day we wish for night, and when it is night we desire day ; fear to be alone, fear to be in company : we can neither read nor hear with attention, nor meditate on God with any composed devotion. Yet let me

tell thee, my friend, from experience, (as having waded through these, and more afflictions, that are not to be expressed) if such distress is now, or has been, on thee, God is near at hand, to bear up thy drooping soul ; he is ever underneath, and round about, though for a while thou seest him not.

I have always found, that after such times he has appeared with more lustre and glory, to teach us not to attribute any thing to ourselves ; nor fix our thoughts on any thing less than his omnipotency. For he that has made the sea, and prescribed bounds to the waves thereof ; saying, hitherto shalt thou come and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed, is not to be limited by finite creatures, as the best of men are.

And though the sea may dash against the shore, and threaten an inundation, it cannot exceed its bounds but by the direction, or at least high sufferance of Almighty wisdom ; who is not less in regard to his children's well-being, than wise in his counsels to frustrate the proudest attempts of the wicked. Wherefore, by having an eye single to him in all times of tossings, and fluctuations of the mind, proceeding from what cause they may, is the

most proper method to attain to a settled state and condition.

When the disciples of our Lord were tossed on the sea, their help was near; though to them Jesus seemed to be asleep and undisturbed, yet his inward apprehension as God, was awake and ready to help them at their call: "Master carest thou not that we "perish?" At which he arose, rebuked the wind, said to the sea, Peace, be still: and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm: the admiration of his disciples seemed to be raised more in that signal deliverance than in any other miracle, inasmuch as they were, at that time, the immediate objects of his mercy, and partook of the blessing of his powerful word: neither did they fail to return their acknowledgments, by saying, What manner of a man is this, that even the wind and the seas obey him?

Thus is he near, when he seems to be most absent; ready to help in every needful time of trouble, as he is called upon in the least degree of faith: settling and quieting the mind in his own time. His deliverance comes sometimes entirely unexpected by the creature; but whether it comes early or late in that deliverance, there is a looking back with

wonder and acknowledgment to God. As Israel sang on the banks of the sea, saying, The Lord is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders: or again, These are thy wonderful works, O Lord! my soul hath been brought down to the borders of the pit, and thou hast delivered it again from the destroyer, and hast once more set my feet in the just man's path, in the bright-shining light, that shall shine more and more unto the perfect day. In those short intervals the soul gathers strength to ascend to its beloved, and rejoices in her happy deliverance from bondage.

And it is agreeable to the experience of many that there is no state that produces such convincing proof of the regard of heaven, as that wherein we are reduced to poverty and want, in such a manner as that there appears nothing but confusion; the very brute animals seem in the more desirable condition; they rove idly unemployed, and have their food prepared in season, and if they are slain, death is to them an end of all their sorrows. The trees, shrubs, and all the species of inanimate things, seem to discover a greater beauty, and display a livelier texture of their great original than we; these, though they suffer decay in

nature by the scythe of time, and are soon reduced to the earth from whence they sprung, yet suffer an insensible waste ; and as they are not sensible of pain, they neither can, nor need cry out for succour. But man, the noblest part of God's creation, made to adore and reverence the Supreme Being with sublime intellects, is taught of God to trust in him, to wait upon him, to be resigned to his will in all things, and if at any time he is pleased to hide his face, it is in order to manifest his power, and bring forth more lasting fruits of praise to himself, and more honour and dignity to the creature, by virtue of his own prolific word. For by death, life is perfected. By staining the glory of this world, the glory of God is rendered conspicuous. By seeing ourselves really as we are, we have a glimpse of what God is. By beholding our own emptiness, we desire to partake of his fulness: by feeling our own poverty, we desire his riches ; by being hungry and thirsty, we have a true relish of the bread and water of life ; by a real sense of our own unworthiness, we dare not murmur, if we receive nothing ; but in all states, with the holy apostle, learn to be content. Thus God becomes all in all. And thus it is necessary

that we have a spiritual assistance to distinguish times and seasons, as they are in the hand of God: when we abound, not to be lifted up; when in poverty and want, not to repine too much; when afflicted, that we pray, and first seek for the spirit of grace and supplication that we may be directed how and in what manner to pray.

For it is not always right that we should have what we most desire, as creatures, but that which is most profitable for us as Christians, believers, and followers of Christ, who was a most perfect pattern of humility and selfdenial whilst in the flesh. And when near to offer up his life for the sins of the whole world, and having an apprehension of the greatest agonies, he breathes, “ O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!” But as if he checked himself, adds with submission and filial duty, “ Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

We have need to wait in stillness to be renewed with strength, by virtue of the holy anointing, to know what to ask, and temper our longings by a perfect submission: sometimes, to ask no more than to be endued with patience and strength to endure the present

affliction, that it may terminate to our advantage, and acceptance to Almighty God.

At another time, when the days of captivity are ended and the seed which has been oppressed is set at liberty, the soul breathes as in open air, and is enabled to ascend to the divine majesty, with free supplication, and an earnest is, as it were, resounding back with heavenly harmony, which gives a firm belief, that our prayers are heard.

But when the emanations of this divine life are absent, (which is not to be accounted strange) the enemy of man's peace and happiness who waits all opportunities, like a restless and indefatigable foe, to besiege, and if possible to destroy and lay waste the whole city of God: he is then ready to make his strongest attempts to shake the foundation. But the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, the Lord knows them that are his.

The enemy may tempt us, and raise great disorders and fluctuations in the mind without any cause assigned; but he that was a liar and murderer from the beginning, is so still; and as he abode not in the truth, his envy is raised more particularly against all those who strive to persevere in it. Let us trust in God, who will not suffer us to be

tempted above that we are able to bear, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape it.

My dear friend: though I seem to have exceeded the bounds of a letter, I am obliged to confine my thoughts, and can send thee only a short abstract of what has presented itself to my mind with a share of warmth and sweetness. I shall add, it hath been my humble petition to Almighty God, that he may vouchsafe to draw nigh, with the visitations of his pure light, and in mercy cause his brightness to appear, by removing the cloud which hangs over the tabernacle, and so far favour those who have no might of their own, as to guard them with his own arm by day and night, gently leading those that are with young, bearing them in his arms.

LETTER XIX.

THOUGH time and strength seem to fail more fully to visit you in the exercise of that part of the ministry which the Lord hath been pleased graciously to bestow upon me, yet I am glad and thankful for this opportunity of seeing and conversing with my dear friends in

this kingdom, who are preserved a tender and zealous people, to the honour of God; which renders my visit, under the many afflicting circumstances attending, easy and profitable to me, in the best things. Nevertheless, it comes upon me to make some short remarks to you, from a tender concern for the church's edification and not discouragement: and first, in general, it is more than a little manifest, there is a great declension of true love and tenderness among us towards to Lord, and one another; and in too many elders, both in respect to their own condition, and the tuition of their children. In many of the youth there appears little sense of truth: but as some have already taken their flight, more seem to be upon the wing: which in a word, seems to lie much at the doors of such elders who have not kept their first love. Is not blindness in part already happened to Israel, through the subtle workings and aboundings of the mystery of iniquity, and the prevalence of the God of this world: let us therefore as many as have the cause of truth at heart, offer our supplications, with strong cries to the Lord, (as good Jacob did when the enemy was coming in like a flood, to destroy the heritage and seed of promise,)

that he will be graciously pleased, for his great name's sake, to turn the captivity of his people, by the renewing of his powerful visitation on many; to the searching and tendering of deceitful hard and ungreatful hearts, who cover and hide themselves as Adam did, after he had sinned; but they cannot hide from the Lord, nor escape his judgments. O how hard, cold, and unprofitable do our religious meetings often appear to be: which have formerly been our greatest comfort and joy in the Lord, and in one another, though at times silent, and attended with difficulty. This is lamentable to the living, who have known it otherwise, and sufficient proof there is a great declension among us.

Further, our Christian testimony against tithes, which has cost us so much spoil of goods, and hard sufferings in person, even unto death of some to maintain, seems now an insupportable burthen to many professing the same faith; who, by treachery and cowardly flight give it up, and surrender it to the enemy, to the great affliction of many valliants in Israel; both on behalf of their condition, who so do, and in that the burthen lies heavier on the rest. Such persisting will never prosper, but shall be made mani-

fest, go where they may: yea, although they should say in their hearts, we will go up to a land of peace and plenty, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, neither suffer the lack of bread. How would such, who cannot suffer cheerfully for one branch of the testimony, have stood in the days of our fathers? As the prophet Jeremiah saith, If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have overcome thee, how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustest, they have wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"

Again, it is afflicting to consider how our Christian reputation is stained in matters of *meum* and *tuum*, whilst we are the highest professing people. Surely, the generality of the unhappy failures that have happened among us, are through unfaithfulness and neglect of the divine principle of light and truth within, as well as repeated advice and warning of tender concerned friends; who have at heart the temporal and eternal happiness of the society. I say, it is for want of an obedient ear and steady attention thereunto, which would produce faith in him that feeds the ravens, and clothes the lilies; and

has promised the necessary to his humble depending children, giving sweet content therein : for he who murmurs at his little, would be exalted in the enjoyment of much, but they who trust in the Lord, shall not be confounded ; neither shall they fall into disgrace on the one hand, nor snares on the other.

Now, dear friends, the sense of these things is very afflicting to the faithful, both ministers and others, who discern the sad signs of this time ; are sound in judgment, steady in love, strong in faith, and are concerned to run to and fro as upon Zion's walls ; visiting public meetings, and private families ; rising early, and testifying faithfully what the counsel of the divine oracle is, as far as known to them ; and that unless there is a laying to heart, and more fruit of righteousness, love to God, and tenderness to the praise and glory of God, a sifting time will come, and not to speak prophetically, is believed to be near, notwithstanding some may say, " Every vision faileth, and the days are prolonged : " but thus saith the Lord, the days are at hand, and the effect of every vision," (Ezek. 12.) for the abominations and daily profanations of the people, and for the

great declension of many among us. For many are the awakening testimonies of this day, which are, and have been delivered by the afflicted servants and handmaids of the Lord who go bowed down in painfulness and weariness. But some are ready to say, The ministry is not what it has been. It may be so with respect to particulars : but blessed be the Lord, there is still a faithful, and free ministry : free from self-seeking, free from partiality and deceit, in whom there is no straitness, but as saith the apostle, “ the “ straitness is in your own bowels ;” and considering how great that straitness is in the hearts of many, I am thankful that the true ministry is not yet shut up towards Israel, and the stream of it turned other ways : many love to hear, but not to do, yet the time is not come, wherein it is said, “ Let them alone.”

O that this lethargy and sleep of death may be come out of through speedy repentance and amendment ; else I believe the Lord will not continue long thus to expose his servants : but the word of the Lord shall be precious, and many will say, “ Blessed is he that cometh “ in the name of the Lord.” A precious seed nevertheless is remaining in both elders

and young men, whom the Lord hath blessed, and will preserve as in the hollow of his hand, until his indignation be over-past : yea and his holy arm of power, (stretched forth in wrath for the punishment of the wicked) is also revealed for their salvation, whose prayers and intercessions with the great and most merciful God, have prevailed for prolonging his tender visitations, and sparing the nations, even in a degree, as that of Abraham and Moses did : and I fully believe, that although the church will suffer, and the nations be afflicted, and not only the earth but the heavens also will be shaken, and that there will be many pained hearts, and pale faces, yet afterwards, the air will be clear, calm and temperate, the earth fruitful, plenteous the dew of heaven, and great the harvest ; even after Jerusalem is purged and Zion hath shaken herself from the dust of the earth, and hath put on her pure, and primitive garments of faith, love, zeal, simplicity, temperance and moderation. For I trust to die in the faith of this, that the Lord will yet make his church an eternal excellency, the beauty of nations, and the glory of the whole earth : whose foundations stand sure, (though many slide therefrom,) other than which, believed

in by us, shall never be laid: that is, the light and manifestations of the spirit of Christ, the true teacher and comforter, the infallible guide unto life and peace, who promised to be with the faithful to the end of the world.

The sense of the life and virtue of this principle, wherein stands our sweet communion and heavenly fellowship, draws me towards you the chosen of the Lord, to bear his name; notwithstanding I cannot but be thus plain. To conclude, I declare my belief, the Lord waits to be gracious: O therefore let all prepare to meet him, by a diligent improvement of their own gifts: therein wait with fear and reverence in all your meetings, for the overshadowing of the pure power and tendering love; therein act in truth's concerns with cheerfulness and success: for the Lord Almighty will give a blessing, (whose counsel and secrets are with them that fear him,) even to the bringing to light the hidden abominations, and discovering stumbling blocks: and to the comforting the weak, who have been offended, and turned out of the way: to the reaching and tendering the youth, to the recovery, at least of some backsliders, and poor lost sheep: so will the church in general be comforted, her afflicted

ministers relieved, and the Lord over all glorified, who with his Son the Lamb, is worthy for ever.

LETTER XX.

IN the spring of immortal love I greet thee, wishing thy soul's welfare in Christ Jesus.

Beloved, with whom my soul hath often been comforted ; it is in my mind to express to thee the sense I have of the work to which we are called, which is very weighty. To be as the mouth of the Lord to an assembly ; and to be as the mouth of an assembly to the Lord, is a matter of great importance, in which we have need to take care to behave ourselves wisely.

Ministers are as the watchmen spoken of in Scripture ; if they warned not the people faithfully in the word of the Lord, he was to require the blood of the people at thier hands. If ministers are not faithful in the word of reconciliation, the more will be their condemnation.

Now, as we ought to be faithful in the delivery of our testimony, or as I may say the word of the Lord through us, so we ought to be watchful, that we may not give enter-

tainment to what is not the word of the Lord to his people : we ought to take heed that we go not forth upon openings barely, although they are witnessed in the life, which may be designed for our own interest and edification. As we abide in the wisdom of God, it will be clearly seen what we should join with, and what refuse ; what to communicate to others, and what to apply to ourselves.

And in our testimony let us keep to fresh openings ; even such as have the weight of the living word in them, and be very careful that we lay not hold of former openings, neither of our own nor others ; lest it be like the manna which was gathered yesterday, and lest we be guilty of stealing the word from others.

Above all things let us travail for life in meetings : though there may be a dependance upon, and desire after, words in a meeting ; which we being sensible of are not to go forth with former openings, and what we have treasured up in our memories of our own, or the openings of others, thinking thereby to supply the service of a meeting. This is but will-worship, and an offering which the living God will reject. I have considered how

it fared with Saul, who being pressed with difficulties, viz. the camp of the Philistines near, and the people of Israel like to scatter, the prophet Samuel being absent: in this strait Saul offers a sacrifice, for which he was reprov'd by the prophet, who told him he had done foolishly, and that his kingdom should not continue. Here is an instance of the danger of forward offering, although there was a seeming necessity for something to be done. Let us bring the matter home to ourselves: let us not be hasty, but keep close to the word of life: and though the dependance of the people may be upon thee, and in all likelihood none to answer the service in a publick way but thyself, yet if the power of the Lord is not witnessed, and his word open not in thee, venture not, but wait in the patient suffering, for it will do no good. Such reasoning as these may attend: here are divers come in that are sober, and well inclined, perhaps if a testimony was borne, they might receive benefit by it; surely I may take liberty to tell them my own experience, and how the Lord visited me in their state; it may have no evil effect, though I am not constrained to do it; in answer to which I say, the best of this sort is but will-worship, which finds

no acceptance with God, neither will it in any wise promote the work and service; for the will of man must come to be laid in the dust, before the will of God can be done by us. We may plead excuse that it is done in a zeal for God and his truth; but that will not do, whilst the moving cause of our performance is too much in active self, and the creaturely will.

Silent, painful, patient suffering in times of desertion, will be much more acceptable to God and beneficial to the people, and prove much more to our own peace, and inward strength. O that we may keep to the power of God in all things; that, being seasoned therewith, we may preach in our lives and conversations. This will adorn our doctrine, beautify our souls, and make us comely in the eyes of our beloved.

Great is the goodness and love of our God, in that he hath condescended to make known the riches of his free love to poor striplings: choosing the weak, simple, and mean things in man's estimation, for his use and service: O that we may feel the weight of his love herein, so as to be humbly bowed before him into nothingness of self: that what we

are, we may really be by the power and grace of God.

I fear some rush into things hastily, without considering their weight and importance : whereby their standing hath been dangerous. It is the life of religion that is a shelter from the heat, and a covert from the storms, and as the shade of a mighty rock in a weary land.

LETTER XXI.

10th Mo. 1760.

THE relation I stand in to one of thy little scholars, binds me in duty to take all possible care, that she may be kept in infant innocence ; and insructed in every moral duty, as well as Christian virtue. I took early care to instill into her tender mind, a reverent and awful sense of the Supreme Being ; the former, as well as great legislator of all his creatures.

When amongst the moral and divine laws he enjoyed his early church, the following was not the least commandment (having a special penalty annexed) “ Thou shalt not “ take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ; “ for the Lord will not hold him guiltless “ that taketh his name in vain.”

This injunction remaining in force upon all Christians, I took care to put her in mind of it; and whenever I observed her using expressions that in the least by similitude of sound bordered upon it, I always chid her for it: so that upon these admonitions, I kept her, as often as I was with her, innocent of this evil which, it is to be remarked with sorrow, too many called Christians are not afraid to be in the daily commission of, though they so often hear the third command repeated.

And now to come to the occasion of this address to thee. When my grand-daughter went from school sick of the measles, I was with her, till she recovered. But to my great surprise, in the course of her illness, the repetition of plain O Lord, without disguise, came so often from her, that it afflicted me greatly: as I began to fear my labour would prove in vain, she being out of the way of my counsel and admonition. I asked her how she got that habit of speech; she answered, the girls at school said so.

As it cannot be supposed that at thy advanced age the children should be always under thy notice, yet I hope thou wilt give instructions to thy assistants to discountenance such an evil practice among the children. We

may remark it is a common proverb, "That manners make the man," and consequently the agreeable woman. I do not mean a civil and becoming behaviour only, though that is indispensably necessary towards forming either sex, but a care is due to their morals, by observing and correcting their early passions: I mean not by whipping children out of their foibles, but, by a proper authority, subjecting their tempers, humours, and inclinations to pride, and ill nature and stubbornness.

I have no intention to give thee offence by these remarks, but am obliged to say thus much in point of duty.

Sophia Hume.

LETTER XXII.

7th Mo. 1752.

IT is four years since it pleased the Divine Being to draw me in a manner (which is wonderful to me, and which I cannot now comprehend) to draw me, I say into a consideration of my state, and repentance for my long backslidings, and a desire for forgiveness and acceptance again. In the infancy of those times, many were my sighs and tears, but many were the promises which encouraged

my perseverance in the path of judgment. As I went on, I found the enemy of all good, after having in vain assayed to cast me down below measure, (by adding imaginary fuel to that of godly sorrow which worketh true repentance,) endeavouring in the progress of my travel to elevate me too much, by persuading me that now there was no necessity for so much mortification, self-denial, and retiredness, as aforetime. And in this, to my shame, I will confess, he too often prevailed. But through the tender mercy of the Father of mercies, notwithstanding the working of the adversary upon a disposition naturally light, vain, and inconstant, I have been preserved, if not always in the midst of the right path, yet with my face always set that way. And though instrumental helps do not affect me so much as formerly, yet is my spirit often as much contrited as ever, my heart as much enlarged in prayers and tears, and my desires after invisibles, as strong as ever. But, dear friend, here is my strait and difficulty, that though I have as it were passed from the watchmen, yet still I find not him, to my comfort, whom my soul loveth; but the morning seems to be as far off, as when I first perceived it was night: and in

this distress I am at times ready to cry out, Oh, wilt thou never, never appear! surely none have been so dealt with as I! must I be the only one who seeks thy face in vain?

One crumb, the smallest pittance, so it be the divine, will suffice me! then am I brought into the deepest humiliation, and ready to make covenant, that I will be any thing or nothing, so that I may be admitted to be one of this family. O surely it is a matter of great difficulty to be re-admitted, so that those who are in any degree favoured with an abode here, had need to use all diligence to obtain a settlement and establishment, that they may go no more out.

LETTER XXIII.

7th Mo. 1752.

THOUGH my ability is weak, my understanding and experience very little, and my stability still less, so that I am sure I am in a state which wants to receive advice and encouragement, rather than give it: yet in my poor measure, I am willing to do any little thing in my power for the good of my dear friends; whom I sincerely love, for that cause, which more than all things, I desire should prosper. And therefore, dear cousin,

I would invite thee not to dainties, for I have not for many years had any for myself; but come along with me to a preparation and a capacity for receiving of them. We must first be washed in the water of life before we can taste thereof.

The angel, (the messenger of the covenant,) must be pleased first to descend and trouble the waters, (our thoughts, affections and desires,) then the lame must be washed therein before he can be healed. This, which is the washing of regeneration, is the first step to be made preparatory to the remission of sins and witnessing the times of refreshment from before the Lord : an operation which too many are not willing to undergo. Like Naaman they think it too mean to wash in the little river of Jordan, and like him they would have their change brought about after some more great and powerful manner. But my poor soul knows by the experience of some years, and by many and deep baptisms, that the Almighty is indeed various in his operations, working diversely on divers hearts, and causing the kingdom of Saul to grow weaker and weaker, and the kingdom of David to grow stronger and stronger, in a quicker or slower manner according to his own

wisdom in those whom it has pleased him to visit; but that he is invariable in this, that he requires of each of us to seek unto him alone and follow him (not by imitation of others but by the teachings of his own spirit with faithfulness, patience, humility, and resignation) in that particular way which he has cast up for us to walk in. And if we be engaged steadily to proceed herein, we shall experience in our own particulars the fulfilling of the dispensation antecedent to the coming of Christ, viz. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths, or make straight in the desert a high way for our God.

LETTER XXIV.

8th Mo. 1752.

MANY are the visited and called of the Lord, but few are his shosen. The reason I believe is, because all those who are visited are not faithful to the little discoveries which are made to them: some are too stubborn or cowardly to bear the cross, and others are too wise; and by their reasoning and comparing, instead of obedience to the convictions of grace, cause the eye which has in

measure been opened, to be closed again by the God of this world and of the wisdom which is in it. If thou be determined, dear friend, in good earnest to press forward, and endeavour to persevere to the end, (for running well for a time will stand us in little stead) keep nothing alive which should be slain, give up cheerfully to the fire that chaffy combustible nature which is for the fire; and let the sword of the Spirit pierce and divide that which is for the sword; and as thou art faithful herein thou wilt know by degrees judgment to be brought forth into victory, and thou shalt in due season feel that peace which passeth the understanding.

LETTER XXV.

4th Mo. 1755.

WE should labour to command our own spirits, which not being properly subjected, I believe, often prevent the spirit of truth from reigning and governing in us: without whose influence, how can we walk exemplary before our families and neighbours, or be servicable in the society. I have thought that we are compound beings, and as we are a mixture of matter and spirit, soul and body, so

the soul has a mixture of the natural and spiritual, which have a very close connection. Neither is this connection between the natural and spiritual part of the soul any more necessary to be divided for our well being (in some degree) in this life, than the soul and body. It is requisite that, in both cases, the natural be subject to the spiritual. But as the improper usage of the body often stupifies the soul, so the improper government of our own spirits often hinders the arising into dominion of the spirit of truth.

Let us then, dear friend, use all the means in our power to keep our own spirits in subjection, and regulate our outward affairs as well as we can in order to attain that end; and Providence, doubtless, will not be wanting by supernatural aid to assist us in subduing those enemies of our own house; that so by degrees body, soul and spirit, may be brought into a proper rectitude in his sight. Methinks it is a very useful and essential part of knowledge, to distinguish between the natural and spiritual both in ourselves and others, in order to be rightly qualified for the service of this day. But our own fallen wisdom can never comprehend this knowledge. This is only to be learned of the word, which

the apostle compares to a sword that can make a division, as between the joints and marrow, the soul and spirit.

LETTER XXVI.

1st Mo. 1761.

SURELY some people or other, of honest plain and simple hearts, will be raised up as witnesses to this life: for, as to the generality of us now making profession of it, there are numbers, who seem entirely unacquainted with the influence of it, and neither to own it in their experience, nor confess it in their lives. According to my little sense, a spirit of ease and indifference has taken such strong root among us that it must be some violent and terrible shock that will loosen it. A declension is often and justly complained of, but I wish we would each strictly examine ourselves, how far we are clear of it. It has of late appeared to me that whoever through want of watchfulness or faithfulness does not come up in the rank and station allotted to him, but falls short of the service designed him, comes short of the glory of God, and contributes individually to this general declension, though he may have been and still is the visited of

the Lord, and a child of the family: and when I consider the excellence and importance of the cause of true religion, and what manner of persons those should be who are engaged to be active therein, I have been ready to say, Who is sufficient for these things? these reflections above hinted seem however to have this good effect on myself, that measuring what I am by what I ought to be, and perhaps might have been, if it had not been my own fault, I am made thoroughly sensible of my own weakness and worthlessness. I wish I could as effectually get released from my failings, as I plainly see them, and sometimes heartily lament them.

LETTER XXVII.

5th Mo. 1762.

WE have been informed of thy embarking in the uncertain and precarious business of a boarding school. It may well be termed embarking, because it seems much to depend on the temper and caprice of others; tempers fluctuating and changeable. But as there is one whom the winds and seas obey, so if we first and principally seek his blessing, and demean ourselves at all times and in

all places with such a tender regard to his honour, and fidelity to his testimony, as will most certainly draw down his notice and favour upon us, we shall do well in every respect; and if he causes us to be stewards over much, he will teach us to use it to his honour: if in his infinite and unsearchable wisdom he sees meet to grant but a little, the little, with his blessing, will be sufficient and best. For thy own sake therefore, dear friend, for the sake of thy own true interest temporal and spiritual, and for the sake of that most noble and glorious cause, which blessed are they who (by their precept, influence and example) contribute to help forward every one in his rank and station, even the cause of that religion which we profess, (Christianity in its purity, undefiled with the mixture of worldly rites, observations and ceremonies) be humble and steady, be much in retirement, think nothing of thyself, think nothing of thy person, nothing of thy parts either natural or improved; if thou be elevated with any of these, or any other consideration, thou wilt never be truly honourable: the eye of heaven will view thy lofty dwelling with disapprobation, for what is the most pompous state of man with respect to

personal accomplishments and acquisitions, in the view of him, who charges even his angels with folly, and the very heavens are not pure in his sight? Consider what manner of person it is whom the sacred scriptures bear record that the favourable regard of omnipotence is toward, "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." But if thou walk in such humility and self-abasement as the true light will shew thee is altogether becoming thy state, condition and existence, if thou diligently hearken to, and faithfully obey the dictates of that holy principle of grace, which is the criterion of our religious profession, thou wilt be in the favour and under the protection of divine Providence, and no necessary good thing, spiritual or temporal, will be wanting.

LETTER XXVIII.

5th Mo. 1762.

THAT crafty enemy with whom we have to contend, well knows how to turn the engines of our passions against our own souls, to batter down the walls and bulwarks of our salvation; he endeavours to draw out of the

way the youth and middle aged, by the allurements of deceitful pleasures, or to encumber or retard them in it by the weight of worldly cares ; and if by the special favour and interposition of divine help, they have escaped the baits laid for that season of life, and have arrived to old age ; neither there are they safe of themselves. He attacks the old with their own natural infirmities of body and mind, so nearly connected, that the one often affects the other, if they have lived from youth to age in serving themselves only, and in insensibility as to religion, his business is to rock them to sleep still, till they sleep the sleep of death : but if in the more active part of life they have been quickened with a sense of good, and been enabled to do something for this blessed cause, he would endeavour to turn their view to what they have done ; as though that was some merit and some honour to them, and as though that was sufficient for them : he would make use of the heaviness and inaction natural to that stage of life to prevent them from that lively exercise of spirit, in which both young and old must witness their minds to be cleansed and renewed, not only for every day's particular service which it brings along with it, while we

are in the body, but which is absolutely necessary for the preservation of the life of our own souls.

LETTER XXIX.

4th Mo. 1752.

OH, that I may come to be more and more weaned from the love of the world, its friendships and its wisdom, and all the wit and devices of my restless enemy, self. And this has been, and I hope will be, my desire for thee; that thou may more and more be enamoured with the plainness and simplicity of the truth, and by keeping low in the light, mayest see and escape the subtilty of the serpent in all his seemingly glorious transformations, in all his efforts to puff thee up, and all his splendid enticements to deceive. Thou knowest far better than I where and how he is best seen and avoided, and where thy great strength lies; but my unfeigned love for thee, and not any distrust of thy stability, or information from any one, prompts and emboldens me to take this freedom with thee. It is my knowledge of thy good qualities, which the great giver of all good has (for a purpose of his own glory) endowed

thee with, and not thy bad ones (for such are unknown to me) that makes me so much desire thy preservation, and that those gifts and graces may be kept pure and chaste without any base alloy : which I hope and believe they hitherto are.

LETTER XXX.

9th Mo. 1752.

MY beloved friend, how sensible am I of the necessity of a total and absolute resignation and subjection of our will to the divine will, if we ever come to be truly profitable to ourselves, or fit instruments in the Lord's hand for carrying on his work effectually in the earth. I cannot but think that if our wills were thus yoked, the work would not only go on more prosperously, but be far easier to the instruments of it: if our own wills were thoroughly mortified and self of no reputation. When the opposers of truth raged and struck against the testimony of it, they might indeed grieve that which bore witness for the truth in the instrument, but could not gratify their malice in grieving the instrument itself, because self in it being already quite abased and in the dust, the arrow

would fly ineffectually over its head. According to my small judgment, this habitual prostration of self would be an excellent preservative, not only against being too much affected by the good will and applause, but also against being so much troubled and afflicted by the malice and bitterness of men. It is a kind of balking the devil and his agents ; for being already in the valley, it is impossible for them to cast us from an eminence.

LETTER XXXI.

3d Mo. 1753.

THE sorrows and heaviness which the Lord brings over his people immediately, for his own wise purposes, or which are permitted to befall them by adverse accidents, or sometimes by means of the wicked, which (as the psalmist says) are his sword : these are, or may be, for the preparing of the heart for his service, or for weaning from this transitory world and the love of it ; and the Lord is pleased often to sweeten such bitter cups : the troubles which we bring on ourselves, through our own unwatchfulness, I know by experience, lie with a dead weight upon us ;

and from such I heartily pray that both I, and those whom I love, may be delivered.

LETTER XXXII.

8th Mo. 1756.

THOU art near to us, time nor distance have not obliterated the memory of those seasons when we have been blended into one spirit by baptism, and deep has spoken unto deep. Such is the unity, such the friendship and intercourse which is among the children born again of the spiritual birth, which the world knows not of. May this union still grow my beloved, among us, and prayer and supplication be more and more put up on one another's behalf; that we may be enabled to do our days work while here, and hereafter join the assembly of those pure spirits which are ever employed in celebrating the praise of the author of all our happiness.

My spirit bows within me in admiration of that glorious hand which raises the human creature that is passive and obedient to his will, to little less than the dignity of an angel, and crowns it with glory and honour; anointing it with oil above its fellows, who indeed have souls capable of the same refine-

ment and exaltation, but for want of giving up all, and from being wedded to one little lower delight or another, move in less exalted orbits.

LETTER XXXIII.

2d Mo. 1761.

GO on, my dear friend, in the diligent exercise of thy gift; keep thy own hands and heart clean, and thou wilt certainly grow stronger and stronger. Every new faithful discharge of duty will strengthen the root of life in thee, and will be a means of laying up more treasure in heaven, which thou wilt enjoy in fulness at last, when a few more battles are fought, a few more bitter cups are drunk, a few more troubles from the wicked are over. Have a care of the world, beware of its connexions and its prospects; it is of a sticking nature, it is hard to touch it, without getting something of it upon us: if we do not receive the mark (visibly) in our foreheads, we may be in danger of having it secretly in our right hands, and how then can we apply them to the work? will not the savour of the defilement (though it be but small)

be perceived by the wise, to be upon that which we have handled; how then will it prosper?

LETTER XXXIV.

6th Mo. 1761.

THOU art now a man of experience, and shouldest endeavour for such a growth as the apostle witnessed who once was a child, but afterwards in all stations learned to be content. I have thought more than usual of late of the withdrawing of the glory from the assemblies of our society. I am jealous that it lamentably increases. What then must they do, who are yet in infinite mercy and condescension measurably preserved alive? what, but increase in the diligence and deepness of private retirement, wearing sackcloth as within on their flesh? I desire above all things a capacity for this inward steady waiting frame of spirit, being well assured that it is the safest state for ourselves, and most acceptable to the majesty of heaven. May a sense and dread of his majesty (before whom we have a great and important work to do, important to ourselves and important by our example to others,) I say, may his holy fear

be ever so before our eyes, as to preserve us from sinning in thought, word, or deed against him.

LETTER XXXV.

10th Mo. 1763.

I WOULD have thee (for many reasons) to be exemplarily generous in contributing to this and all other public expences relative to the good of the society. Let us shew that we have its welfare at heart, and that we are willing to act, as well as speak for the cause: there has been too great deficiency in this respect among some worthies; it has hurt their service while they were living, and whose is what they saved now they are dead?

Many individuals of our profession, who are rich in this world, are not so in good works, nor active in helping a good work forward. They have not only deviated from the Christian life and manners, which we are called to hold forth to the view of the world; but they seem sunk below the human and rational into the brutish nature: their god is their belly, and their glory is their shame: their ultimate view and desire seems to be to accumulate wealth, and gratify their sensual

appetites: and if our society as some other bodies corporate, was mainly supported by money, I believe sooner than be at any considerable expence in supporting it they would let the testimony of truth fall to the ground and sink into oblivion, as they now trample upon and dishonour it by their lives and conversation.

LETTER XXXVI.

12th Mo. 1763.

I NOTE thy remarks, and acknowledge the justice of them : this wrath of man (of which, pride, imperiousness, self-will and caprice are branches) neither wills nor works the righteousness of God : it does no good: it weakens the reason, lessens the authority, and exposes the nakedness of all who are possessed by it, and act under its influence : they are men of low degree, and (in my opinion) if they will not submit to a proper subordination, and quietly learn of wisdom and her children, they had better be passed by as improper to be confederated with : they will then indulge their own private spleen and rancour ; and they will need no other chastiser, for the fool makes a rod sufficient for

his own back. Not only in the present case, but in most cases affecting the society, we find the middling or lower class most willing to bear the burthen, to conform to discipline, and come into method unitedly for carrying matters into execution; the rich have money and many of them hardly any other qualification of value: if some of them had given something considerable towards this work, perhaps the opposition which they would therefore think they had a right to make to some salutary schemes for establishing and promoting it, would do more hurt than their money would do good. It requires, dear friend, much of that wisdom which dwells with prudence to treat with these rich men;—to petition them (as it were) to give some of their substance towards the conservation of the society, when we know their lives are opposite to the true interests of it, and that they are unfit to communicate with us;—to seem to want their money, and to treat with them for that, when it is themselves we want, and earnestly desire that they themselves may come into and be cherished by the warm bosom of the church. So that, (only that we are all in general so little) I would choose that those who are least, rather than ambassadors

of the first rank from Christ Jesus to his people, should be put upon the office of soliciting for money from them for the contingent expences of society.

LETTER XXXVII.

3d Mo. 1766.

I SEE more and more that I was not cut out to be a man for this world, not one of the wise ones and the great ones of the earth; nor since my thoughts took a religious turn, did I ever expect, or desire it. I can honestly say, that the greatest delight and satisfaction that I ever have in present possession, is to feel the baptism of the spirit to wash my heart, and unite it to the seed in the bitter sense of suffering; and the most pleasing contemplation that I have in future prospect in this life, is to see the prosperity of truth and to be favoured with liberty and capacity to serve the cause thereof in my generation. And for the integrity of this declaration I dare appeal to the searcher of all hearts, who hath even now tendered my spirit in humble prostration before him. And I am glad to feel a renewal of this sacred baptism, (which first cemented our early acquaintance, and I trust

will preserve our fellowship unbroken to the end,) while I thus converse (without any pre-meditation) with thee.

LETTER XXXVIII.

6th Mo. 1771.

I SEEM not to have any repository of my own, from whence I might impart any good thing. So far from it, I am so exceedingly reduced, so complete a bankrupt in my spiritual circumstances, so poor, so beset and embarrassed on all sides, that I never knew, heard, or read of any one like me. I am, or at least feel to myself, so weak at times, that I seem as if I could hardly hold together. Such is the person to whom thou unbosomest thy griefs. Perhaps this short recital of my own state, compared with thy own feelings, may administer some species of relief when thou finds that others are afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted, as well as thyself. Thou rightly, and I doubt not experimentally, remarkest, that effectual relief must come from the Father who seeth in secret. He made us externally and visibly what we are, and endued us with our several organs of existence and preserva-

tion. It is he who (if we be passive under his hand, forming our minds, as we were under the same hand fashioning our bodies, of which we cannot make a single hair white or black) will construct, unite, confirm, and strengthen in his own time the various parts of our inward man; and will endue the same with those spiritual senses necessary for its preservation, and for its ability to act properly in the service of its great Creator. O my friend, wonderfully are we made. My spirit, as is I doubt not thine and thy beloved consort's, is often deeply bowed in humble petition, that Divine Providence may so steer and pilot our several barks through the dangerous seas of life, that whatever wind from external circumstances blows, whether high or low, prosperous or adverse; whether the waves be rough or smooth, whether storms or calms, betide us, we may, enduring all with patience, waiting with quiet submission, not without at times a hope and expectation, be conducted safe at last into the harbour of eternal rest. Should every thing in the voyage be quiet, easy, commodious and agreeable to our wishes, we might perhaps grow presumptuous, and by the interfering of our own carnal wills and wisdom take our bark

as it were out of the hands of the good pilot, and run it against some rocks, where it might perish for ever.

LETTER XXXIX.

4th Mo. 1787.

YE have heard no doubt of our dear friend ————having uncovered his head, his anointed head, in the religious assemblies in Dublin. My heart was glad when I heard it. And the desire of my spirit is, that many more may in all humility and prostration of self, wait in the deeps; each keeping to their own peculiar exercise, till they receive qualification and ability to bring up their stones of memorial, living stones, polished and fitted in the depths from which they are brought. I have seen many sweet and promissing blossoms fair and fragrant, from which delicious fruits might have been expected in due season;—many hopeful youths, of both sexes, whom the Lord has been graciously pleased to visit, and to open an eye in them to see the beauty and excellence which is in the truth, and to view this world as it really is;—but there has not been a following on to know the Lord in progressive stages of ad-

vancement. There has not been a sufficiently diligent waiting for the re-baptizing which purges and makes clean from all defilement of flesh and spirit, nor for the re-anointing, which keeps the internal eye open, to see things natural and things spiritual in the proper light: so there is a dwindling, a decaying, a dwarfishness in stature; a deficiency in measure and weight; and the vacant seats of the princes and nobles, removed from works to rewards, are not effectually filled up; so that defect and weakness have overspread, the dignity of the Church is lowered, and her authority, which stands in the life and in the power of truth, is greatly diminished. If ye are persuaded that these things are so, my dear —, do thou and some of thy near connexions look about you, and see whereabouts you are; let not the cares of this life supersede your concern in those things which relate to a better that is to come. While ye are commendably and moderately diligent in outward business, be diligent and fervent in spirit, serving the Lord and his cause with your best in your generation. Above all things feel after the dew of heaven; and as much of the fatness of the earth as is suitable for you will be added. Let the pure truth and its heavenly wisdom

circumscribe your desires and designs in all things; you will find its government and direction most profitable, both as to the life, which now is, and that which is to come.

LETTER XL.

4th Mo. 1769.

IT's parent's affliction for the loss of that dear departed youth I doubt not has been very considerable: these events are not without the ordering of an all-wise agent, who has many a wheel within a wheel in his great economy. Very likely in mercy he snatched away this youth, now rescued from the temptations of a dangerous troublesome world: he loosened one of these ties, by which some of the survivors were connected perhaps too closely to present visible enjoyments, shewed the fallacy and uncertainty of human prospects, and I trust, effected thereby on some of their minds a more solid thought of, and preparation for, that awful period which hastens with uninterrupted speed upon us all. If we be happily preserved to steer well through this state of probation, we shall go to our beloved friends and acquaintance who are gone well before us, but they cannot re-

turn to us. This is a strong incitement to watchfulness and care, and shews the vanity of a redundancy of grief.

I did not hear before thy intelligence of the actress thou mentions. Such tidings are very agreeable : but would be much more so, if they brought account of an humble, diligent, steady perseverance in the party. Many no doubt are visited by the power of that gospel which is preached in every human creature ; and several are animated with good desires and resolutions to be obedient to it : but when the tempter comes, practising on the inclinations, affections, and passions, and plying his batteries against that side which is most easily beset, for want of the creature waiting for the help of the all-sufficient grace, but dallying with, and listening to the temptation, instead of growing from strength to strength through faithfulness in the little, the soul becomes weaker and weaker, loses its hold of the means of its salvation, and is in danger of perishing for ever.

LETTER XLI.

THOU and I, my dear friend, are blest with beloved consorts and true help-mates agreeable to our wish: we have also a tender hopeful progeny. May we be constantly waiting to feel our spirits seasoned with divine grace, and keep near that holy life, by which we may be enabled by example and precept to answer the just witness in their consciences, and help them forward in the right road: not only suffering, but earnestly persuading the little children to come unto Christ, whose arms are still extended to receive them.

LETTER XLII.

3d Mo. 1775.

SUBMIT we must: our lives, the lives of all we hold dear to us, and every comfort we extract from everything, are in the hand of omnipotence and under his controul; how awfully should we then walk before him who is the source of every blessing to his depending children, and who on the other hand (as a certain author most beautifully remarks) can disquiet the soul and vex it in all its facul-

ties. I have been led very lately to ponder a good deal on the uncertainty of our tranquillity, and the necessity of the interposition of that great power, to preserve us alive in every respect. Doubtless, whatever may be our trials, or from whatever quarter they may come, if we watch steadily unto prayer, if we keep a conscience void of offence, if we look to the Lord for succour, we shall be helped thro' one difficulty, and one exercise after another, till our measure of suffering is filled up, and our weary spirits are admitted into that holy rest prepared for those who through faith have overcome in this dangerous warfare.

LETTER XLIII.

1st Mo. 1787.

AT present, there is cause for much gratitude on account of the day of prosperity which we are favoured with. By and by no doubt comes in the revolution of the seasons, a day of adversity, equally good and profitable for us. May we all, my dear friend, so improve the merciful visitations of heavenly regard and notice, that whether the north or the south wind blow upon our gardens, the

Lord's plantation in us may flourish and bring forth fruit, to the praise of the good and gracious husbandman. I am persuaded that his fatherly intention is to do good to your father's house, and to make it useful and honourable to and among his people. But many, very many, are the dangers and temptations from within and from without, which await the necessary cares of this life ; and the pursuit of things lawful from the purest and noblest motives, if carried to an improper excess, may clog the feet of the inward man, and prevent his running with alacrity the race which, by divine appointment, is set before him. The seeking of great things, the aspiring after this world's grandeur, the imitating and emulating others who are not devoted in body, soul, spirit and substance to the cause of oyuth, hurts the tender plants of renown, and retards its growth.

But to be diligent in the spirit of our minds, often cultivating seasons of retirement, watching daily and hourly unto prayer for preservation from evil and for divine acceptance, witnessing from time to time that baptism which cleanses from all defilement of flesh and spirit, doing nothing which we are persuaded in the secret of our own minds is wrong, and being

faithful to every manifestation of active duty; this I believe is the way to draw down the blessing of heaven, and perpetuate it among us.

LETTER XLIV.

3d Mo. 1763.

INFIRMITIES of various kinds are by the appointment of Infinite Wisdom allotted to our nature, and one disorder or other, with more or less speed, will work the decay of the mortal part of us all: some disorders hurry us with pain and anguish out of life, as it were with open force and violence, while others gradually undermine the constitution; and the absence of much pain causing a flattering hope of longer continuance, the frail tabernacle is dissolved before we are well aware. In this, in that, in every circumstance of life or death, there is one, and but one, sure hope to anchor our tossed tried vessel; to wit, the earnest of eternal rest and peace. This has made the death-bed, even, when agonizing pain of body has attended, as a bed of roses, and the pale messenger has been welcomed as one come to release

the soul from the fetters of mortality, that it may take its flight into the regions of pure joy, and unmixed undisturbed felicity.

LETTER XLV.

7th Mo. 1763.

I READ thy last, and attended to the contents with a mind impressed with sorrow, and indeed sorrow and trouble are at times spread before me on account of the situation of things in our religious society. What is the reason that many educated amongst us should be such enemies to the truth which they profess? yea, the enmity of their spirits (like thick darkness) is to be felt: What must be opposed to these fiery darts? for my part, I know nothing more likely for the honest hearted to defend themselves withal and preserve their own spirits, nor by which they may overcome the agents of the wicked one, than the power of gospel of love. This if patiently kept to, will work wonders: this is invincible, and its armour impenetrable. But if this be in any measure departed from, or adulterated with self-love (which is the parent of resentment) it causes a breach in the panoply (the whole armour) of God who

is love, and so leaves some weak part unguarded to be wounded and hurt. If any therefore have been injured or hurt, to a deep search after the healing virtue of this divine love, I would earnestly recommend them ; and as this becomes predominant in the mind, it will influence to say and do these things, and these only, which make for peace ; and it will bear down all before it, and in due time re-possess the gates of its enemies.

LETTER XLVI.

11th Mo. 1766.

I CAN conceive by past sorrowful experience the trouble your family must be in, on the distressing occasion which thou mentions ; and more especially such of you as are connected with the testimony of truth, which is wounded by this affair ; but such have always this encouragement, that those who suffer for, and with, the testimony, are supported inwardly by it, and in so much greater degree as they are tender of it, and prefer it before the ties of blood, of natural affection, or any other consideration. It looks to me as if this dispensation would be fruitful of refining baptism to you, and I heartily

wish that you may patiently abide the day (or say the night) of it, and I believe you will find all work together for good. But beware of sinking too low in your minds, keep as attentive as possible to feel after solid comfort, and to hear the dictates of the small still voice, in following which there is safety. Methinks the enemy will not be idle at this juncture, but be apt to whisper that things having gone amiss in your own family, ye are much disqualified from intermeddling in the families of others, and that ye are not now proper persons to stand forth in the cause of our discipline in the church. This is the whispering of satan; he is a liar, and believe him not. Our children and every individual in our families have the same divine principle and sufficient grace as ourselves, and in our obedience to it consists our common preservation. If we be careful to live under its law, and thereby be good examples to them; if seasoned by this, when fresh capacity is afforded, we bring forth now and then such meat for our household as we have, though only fragments; if we watch unto prayer for the blessing and protection of Providence over them and us, what more is required, or what more can be done? When, after all,

those that are intimately connected with us by friendship or relationship, swerving from the fear of God, and regard to the admonition of man, violate the law of a good conscience, and the rules established in the society, let us impartially give our judgment with zeal against them, and know no man after the flesh. This is what will conduce to our own peace and strength, disappoint the expectation of those who may watch over us for evil, and may be a means of awakening the party that has offended to ponder more deeply on the offence, and seek more earnestly a place of repentance and restoration. Though I write thus, I have no suspicion of any contrary conduct in you, but believe you will act as those who are sensible that many eyes are over you, and particularly that eye which penetrates into the deepest recesses of our hearts, and knows the most secret movements of our thoughts; the eye of a God, jealous indeed of his honour, yet full of compassion and merciful regard to his poor afflicted devoted children, and servants, who faithfully serve and submissively rely upon him.

LETTER XLVII.

12th Mo. 1766.

I THINK I have seen that thy heavenly Father and Merciful Creator, hath been graciously pleased to visit thee in thy dangerous stage of youth, and that his intention, if thou dost not frustrate it, is to do thee good. Suffer then, my dear friend, with humble resignation, the operation of his purging power. Leave thyself in his hand, and cast thy care upon him. Be diligent above all things to feel after the stirrings of a divine life in thy soul, and wait patiently for its tendering, cleansing baptisms. Oh, this diligent waiting and inward retiredness of spirit! this thou wilt find is the very source and supply of thy ability and capacity to hold out in a religious growth. This is what I most earnestly recommend to thee as the great and principal means of renewing thy strength. If thou rightly learnest this lesson of retirement, thou wilt soon be a ripe scholar in religion, and need not that any man teach thee, but as the holy anointing will teach thee in these seasons of waiting, and imbue thy mind with an understanding of those things which belong to thy

only true, present, and future everlasting peace. I am greatly mistaken if the good will of heaven is not towards thee in particular, and I hope to more of thy father's house. My sincere desire is that ye may be so wise in heart, so true to your own best interest, as not to reject the offers of such gracious favour and condescension, but thankfully embrace them as your chiefest good.

LETTER XLVIII.

2d Mo. 1767.

DEAR cousins, ye are now joined together, I hope, by the ordering hand of Providence; and are advanced a step higher into a more conspicuous station in life and business. The author of every good and perfect gift has given to both of you a good share of natural capacity, and improved understanding; and the means, through frugality and industry, with his blessing, of procuring a comfortable subsistence. He has placed you in a great and populous city, where you profess his holy and saving truth among a large number of others of the same profession, who do not honour it as they ought in their lives and conversations. Now, my dear cou-

sins, my mind is engaged for your temporal and eternal prosperity, and I see the path and the only one that leads infallibly to it; which is, by diligently and faithfully seeking to the Almighty benefactor for his preservation and blessing to be over and about you, and all that is under your hand. Strive not to be, nor to appear great, nor stretch your wings beyond the circumference of the nest which, in the ordering of all-wise Providence is allotted for you. Rather live under, and appear under your ability than over. You will experience safety and quietness in it. The contrary is a temptation and a snare, and an inlet to dangers of various kinds; and often with new beginners lays the foundation of difficulties, straitness, and embarrassments, which they are sometimes never disencumbered of, until they are disencumbered of mortality: nor does the perplexity always end here; their poor bodies indeed rest in the earth, but the distresses of the parents are entailed upon the children; and instead of aggrandizement of family, there is debasement; instead of pomp there is penury; and indigence instead of affluence. Let us take a little view (my dear friend) of the persons and families which have been up and down during our short time

of observation, let us contemplate them, not with an evil nor pitiless eye, but with an eye to the ways of that all-ruling power which resisteth the proud, but giveth his grace additionally to the humble. Let us centre down, and have our dwelling low in a conscious sense of our own unworthiness and insufficiency to direct our own steps, or to prosper either as to the things of this or a better life, without his blessed assistance and protection. Be truly humble, (my dear——) be frequent, and (as much as possible) constant, in feeling after a capacity to breathe in secret after an acquaintance and communion with the author of all goodness. Be exemplary in your own conduct, conversation, and exterior appearance and deportment, as becomes the disciples and professors of the religion established by him who was meek and low in heart, and whose garment was without seam. So will ye, in proportion to the purity of your intentions, and the cleanness of your hands in his sight, gain the favour and approbation of him who knows the heart, and hath all power in his hand to bless, or to blast at his pleasure. I am unusually concerned and desirous that thy conduct may be such, now in the setting off in life, as that the good will

of heaven may be to and upon it ; and if thou happily obtain this, it must certainly be by being a pattern of humility, steadiness and plainness, among thy numerous acquaintance in that city. This may occasion some trials, in which it will often be proved whether thy attachment to the testimony of truth, or to the spirit of the world, is more prevalent. According to the free-will choice which thou wilt be enabled to make, will thy ability to proceed aright be strengthened or weakened, and finally the one side or the other get the victory. The day of small things and of little requirings of duty, proportioned to the state of the children, is by no means to be despised. The cross to our own depraved wills is often to be borne, and many old friendships, connections, habits and propensities of an hurtful or unprofitable nature, will be dissolved or decay : in the room of which new desires and affections, new intimacies and society will gradually be formed. But in all that he throws down, as well as in all he builds up, the Lord Almighty (as we rely upon him, and are faithful to his discoveries) will be found to do every thing right, and for our good, every manner of way.

LETTER XLIX.

2d Mo. 1769.

I HAVE thought of thee with concern, knowing by experience the dangers that unexperienced youth is liable to. The reins have been much left on thy own neck, to run on according to thy own pleasure. Thou hast girded thyself according to thy own liking, and gone whither thou wouldest. And it is of the mercy of thy great Creator, if thou hast been preserved hitherto from falling into the enormities and corruptions, as I doubt thou hast stepped too much into the vanities and follies of the world and its spirit. However, the past is irrevocable: I would have thee make a stand now, and in the cool hour of sober reflection ask thyself, whether thou hast felt more solid satisfaction in the time of dissipation and libertinism, which has since elapsed, than in those seasons of the earlier part of thy youth, when thy heart was humbled within thee under a sense of thy own unworthiness, and thy spirit tendered by the visits of divine grace: visits which were afforded thee by that same great Creator, in wonderful condescension, that thy mind might

be pre-engaged to love, fear and serve him, before the heated imagination and growing passions of more advanced youth, and thy designs and connections on the verge of manhood, might warp thy conduct from the simplicity and safety which is in the blessed truth. Thou knowest best whether thou still enjoyest those tendering sensations of divine favour, or whether thou hast bartered this precious birth-right for foolish fleeting, empty gratifications, which will stand thee in no stead in the day of trouble ; which tend only to estrange and set thee at a distance from thy Almighty Benefactor, who can bless or blast all thy endeavours ; and which preclude thee from that frequency of intercourse with thy best friends, by whose communion, and good counsel thou mightest be profited and helped every way.

LETTER L.

9th Mo. 1769.

I NOTE what thou sayest of thy inward conflicts. I doubt not thy having commenced, and in a good degree successfully carried on that war, which must subsist (while we are in these bodies) between the flesh and

spirit, from generation to generation. I wish we may be enabled still to carry it on, till all our enemies be subdued; the greatest being, I believe, (as thou observest) those of our own houses, or hearts. Let us ever bear in mind, that if we would effectually make war in righteousness, our weapons must be spiritual, not carnal. That which is born of the flesh is only flesh; and the flesh profiteth not in this warfare. Hence I fear often arise these repeated conflicts and struggles, which leave us weak, and do not help on the work; when mixing with some certain company, or engaged in certain hurries and business, we are not watchful enough over our spirits, to possess (keep) these vessels in sanctification and in that honour which adorns our high profession, but suffer more or less defilement. And then again, when religious company, conversation, and affairs present, we feel our want and weakness, and in our own time and wills would be relieved and fain abound. Then the impatience of our spirits would set us to work, and tempt to force the (unacceptable) sacrifice; then we perhaps seek relief and help by complaining to, and conversing with, the approved servants; who if they be wise in heart, are often shut up from such

a state, and find it their duty to keep their own to themselves. These voluntary strivings are of the flesh, or too much mixed with it, so cannot enter the kingdom, which is not to be taken by this kind of violence. But, dear friend, if we would steadily follow on to know the Lord, if we would enjoy him to our solid, permanent comfort, and be willing to be any thing, or nothing in his hand, we must know great stripping and many humble baptisms; and if we passively and patiently abide under the refining, forming hand, we shall be dipped into many tribulating dispensations, which in the course of their operation, will reduce us and our rational powers as men (which are only appertaining to us as being also flesh) exceeding low; so that our sight, with all our other spiritual senses, being purged and clear, we shall see that truly of ourselves we can do nothing; we shall be more and more weaned from temporary aids, and more and more learn this lesson, to cease from man, even the best of men, and have our sole dependance on the Lord Almighty, who is the primary source and supply of every substantial good.

LETTER LI.

1st Mo. 1774.

THOU livest in a place distant from the body of friends belonging to the monthly meeting; and art in more danger, from such a situation of being leavened with the spirit and manners of other people, who though they may be of irreproachable characters among men, yet are not brought up in a belief of, nor directed to feel after the quickening virtue and operation of that saving grace in the heart, which is the only effectual preservative of men from the corruptions of the world. Thou pleadest for thy absence, that thou art married, hast a prospect of a growing family, must attend to a provision for it, and therefore that thou canst not come. I acknowledge that it is highly proper and commendable in thee to be diligent in thy outward business, and to provide by honest means for a decent livelihood. Many of us do the same, and yet knowing the uncertain tenure we have of all things here, and that it is the divine blessing alone which gives the true relish to the enjoyment of them, we dare not be so ungrateful to our great bene-

factor, so disrespectful to our Lord and master, and so unfaithful to the common cause of our holy religion, as frequently to neglect the assembling of ourselves together, in order to wait for a capacity to perform acceptable worship to the Father of spirits, and to assist in conducting the discipline established in the society: and as thou wouldest desire that thou and thine should be partakers of those spiritual and temporal blessings which are in the Lord's hand to bestow, as well as others, why shouldest not thou as well as others demonstrate thy love to him, and attachment to his cause, by an humble devotion of thy time and talents to the author of thy existence? It is absurd to think, and he well deserves the appellation of fool who imagines that his secular affairs will succeed worse, because leaving them settled in a prudent manner, he attends his religious duties as a member of Christian society. Whose are the cattle on a thousand hills? Whose is the earth and the fulness thereof? Who lent us for a short uncertain space these conveniencies of life? and, Who can take them from us, or us from them, at his pleasure?

But it is reported, that thou art so far from joining with us in support of the hedge of

discipline which the Lord hath planted about us, that thou art for pulling it down: that so far from making a sacrifice of any little part of thy substance to the support of our testimony, thou art for sacrificing the testimony of truth to a little sordid gain: and instead of walking in the way of our worthy ancestors, that thou art, in the days of thy youth and prosperity, ready to trample on the testimony which they bore through many afflictions, and several of them sealed with the loss of their lives. I mean our testimony against the payment of tithes, or contributing actively to the support of an hireling ministry. It would exceed the ordinary limits of a letter, even to touch upon the numerous arguments which might be brought, both from right reason and holy scripture, against this antichristian yoke; therefore I refer thee for satisfaction in this point, to those writings on this subject which are common in the families of friends; and at present would just caution thee not obstinately, after repeated advice to the contrary, to violate so material a branch of our Christian testimony, which cost our predecessors so dear; because by persisting in the resolution which I am told thou hast formed in this respect, thou wilt, in a great

measure, break the bond of fellowship with our religious society, and I believe it will not prosper with thee.

LETTER LII.

6th Mo. 1777.

I NOTE thy desire to be acquainted with true religion, and that thou hast read books, and cultivated acquaintance with such as might be likely to instruct thee in it. Indeed the generality of people bestow very little solid thought about religious matters; and if any should be more inquisitive than ordinary, concerning the way of life and salvation, they are branded often with the names of Quakers, Methodists, Fanatics, or Enthusiasts. However, ridicule is by no means the test of truth, and right and wrong remain irreconcilable things; the former is worth all the pains of our deep search, and investigation, the latter it concerns us to avoid with the most cautious circumspection. It certainly is not consistent with the nobility and excellence of a rational mind, to adopt the most important principles connected with our everlasting interest merely upon trust, and by tradition; the religion of our education while we were

children, should be the religion of our feelings and of our judgment when we arrive at maturity of understanding, or it should be changed for that which is so. Nor is such a change in any degree degrading to the party that makes it, when it is done purely from conscientious motives : on the contrary, it is rational and laudable, and has the sanction of apostolical precept, “ Prove all things : hold fast that which is good.” But a change of religious profession, barely, will stand us in little stead : the unregenerate man or woman must witness a change of nature, which is a change from nominal to real religion, from shadow to substance, from the name to the thing : and in effecting this, true christianity is learned by experience, and by experience we know and feel the meaning of the terms, and the efficacy of the means employed in this great mystery. People may talk about regeneration, faith, baptism, sanctification, justification, &c. and may reason concerning the progress of the work of religion in the soul but if, they do not know and feel it going on in themselves, they are no more benefited by their head knowledge, than the man who is languishing for want of food, is strengthened by talking of eating. We are to receive these things

as little children, waiting in the simplicity of our hearts, and abstractedness of thought, to be fed by the Divine Hand, with food convenient for us. If we trust in the Lord with all our hearts, and lean not to our own understanding, he will lead us on gradually, feed us according to our growth, and inform our understanding in the things of his kingdom, as we shall be able to bear or comprehend them. I wish thee, dear friend, to be still in thy mind, to guard against restlessness and impatience, to employ thyself quietly and cheerfully in thy outward occupation (which will help to prune away a redundance of unprofitable thoughts,) and to be diligent in waiting for and feeling after that spring of comfort in thy own mind, which is not under thy controul, nor at thy command, nor can be come at by the working of any artificial tool of our imagination; but which the great master sends in his own time “To revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

LETTER LIII.

12th Mo. 1780.

A PERSONAL interview is pleasing, when it can be enjoyed in a degree of calmness and

quiet : but as many things combine to prevent that, I wish us to meet often in spirit—" Absent in body, yet present in spirit." In this, my first acquaintance and fellowship with thee was formed, before I personally knew thee : in this it has been renewed and confirmed.

I travail for you, dear children, that Christ may be formed in you, that ye may be complete in him, lacking nothing. The cry of my heart for you has repeatedly been, that the Lord would make you such as he would have you to be. If left to ourselves, and to model ourselves and our demeanour according to patterns which in our own judgment we may set down as most excellent and worthy of imitation, our inward man will be apt to grow feeble and distorted, and its constitution sickly and unsound : but leaving ourselves to the Lord Almighty to create in us a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within us, diligently waiting in nothingness of self, out of our own willings and strivings, for the descending of the power of truth to contrite and baptize our spirits, we shall witness a being melted down and moulded anew into whatever utensil, form and size, the maker pleases. Here is the great matter on our parts, even to be passive in the Divine hand, as clay in the hand of

the potter. The mixture of our own imaginations is what we are carefully to watch against, being the thing which mars the perfection and sullies the beauty of the Lord's work. All that he makes is unmingled good; so the more simply and unreservedly we submit ourselves to be prepared and fashioned by him, the more of that unmingled good, will be in our spiritual composition, and the nearer we shall approach to the highest perfection of our natures, the fulfilling the precept of Christ, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect."

LETTER LIV.

12th Mo. 1781,

I LIKE that young men should avow their principles, and range themselves on the right side. I like that they should engage in such acts as will shew they are not in alliance with the enemies of God's true Israel. There must and will be enmity between the two seeds.

My spirit has waded in the deeps many a time, in travail for the visited youth, that not one grain of the heavenly seed might be lost, nor unfruitful; and now my cry is that they

may "Go forward." They have many of them been tied up from the further sallies of their own wild nature; they have known the discipline of the cross; and now the Master hath need of them, (alluding to the passage in Mat. 21st chap.) he calls for their service in the church. Indeed they can never serve a better master—his service dignifies the meanest talents; and the brightest, if they tend not to promote it, are but meanly employed. This world, its bustle, its pursuits, and its highest glory, will soon be over to every one that is at present in it. Then the answer of "Well done! good and faithful servant," will be a more joyful sound, a more substantial reward, than all the favour and friendship, false praise and honour, which this life can bestow.

LETTER LV.

3d Mo. 1783.

SHE is now released from those long infirmities which infinite wisdom permitted her to pass through, for the trial of her faith and patience, and for her preparation for an admittance into that rest, into which nothing impure can enter. Refined and polished

while here for the company of blessed spirits, she is (I doubt not) mingled in their happy society. We remain a little longer to struggle with the difficulties, and encounter the temptations, which belong to this life. We are not yet putting off our harness, therefore have no reason to boast, but to dwell in awful fear. We are some of us the heads of families, and principal persons in our places: our precepts and our example therefore must have considerable weight and influence. — How necessary is it for us then to ask wisdom of him, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not; that by rightly fulfilling all our several duties in our families and in the church, we may, as we pass along in our journey, have the answer in our consciences of “ Well done ! good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,” as well as that happy sentence at the close of this visible scene ?

My mind, while I am thus engaged, is turned with tender solicitude towards thy beloved offspring. I believe that many of them (and most probably all of them) have felt the gentle touches of the Divine Hand, and the invitations of the good spirit in the secret of their souls, drawing them from the spirit of

the world, in its manifold appearances, and begetting in them desires and aspirations after enduring substance. May they with all diligence cultivate the renewal of these tendering impressions, and in all humility submit to the operation of these cleansing baptisms, which purify the heart, and make it a fit receptacle for unmixed good. A gracious Providence has not been wanting in his visitations to the youth amongst us ; but there has been a great want in them of following on to know the Lord in the renewed experience of his humbling power, and in the further manifestations of his will concerning them ;—hence the goodness of too many of them is but like the morning cloud and early dew ; it is soon superceded by a relish for the pomps and vanities of this world, and their baptismal vows are soon forgotten ; and hence a want of succession of testimony bearers to the noblest cause, which ever did, or ever will, dignify human nature. I particularly wish for the elder branches of thy numerous hopeful stock, as now a greater charge devolves upon them, that they may seek and wait for heavenly wisdom to direct their own steps, and influence every part of their conduct ; that so they may grow in favour with their

great Creator, and in his hand be made a blessing to the younger branches of the family, assisting to train them up, by example and precept, in the life of religion, and in that plainness and simplicity which adorn our holy profession.

LETTER LVI.

2d Mo. 1784.

I HAVE repeatedly heard of thy appearances in a few words in publick and private opportunities, and no doubt, in diffidence and fear. I need not tell thee that it is a great and solemn office to be an ambassador between God and the people. I am persuaded that thou art sensible of it, and that it is the sincere desire of thy heart to be found in the way of thy duty. In thy infant state thou wilt very probably have many doubts, questionings and reasonings : but as the eye is kept single to the one object, the faithful discharge of duty, the whole inward man, will be full of light—enlightened and enabled to walk in the right path, and if fears and jealousies of self should arise, they are not to be fought against in the will of the creature; but words and actions are to be brought to the light of Christ,

that they may be there tried whether they have been wrought and spoken in God, i. e. whether they have the seal of his spirit. Where self is sufficiently abased, and only to will and to do of the Master's good pleasure is the dominant principle, there is not much danger of an honest mind being long under a deception. The feeling of one's own mind, and the concurrent testimony of the living, will, like the mouth of two witnesses, establish every word: and though for wise purposes there may be for a season, as it were, a chaos, and a void, and darkness upon the face of the deep; yet as the operation of the spirit of truth in thy soul is diligently waited for, and the turning of his holy hand is patiently borne and submitted to, he will (I trust) in his own time, "Bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day."

LETTER LVII.

9th Mo. 1784.

IT was very pleasing to hear that it proved consistent with the Divine will to lengthen out thy short span, to add a few days more to thy pilgrimage. To those engaged in the same warfare it is a matter of gladness and

strength to have their companions continued to them.—Thou knowest what this world is ; a place of danger, temptation and perplexity ; a place where we exceedingly want Almighty help, protection and direction ; we want the fear of the Lord to be ever before our eyes, that we may be solid, weighty, steady in the face of our families, and our connections and familiar acquaintance ; we greatly want wisdom, fresh and fresh for every occasion, that we may fill up our stations in the church with propriety and acceptance. This is a great family, in which are many servants allotted to many different offices ; various work is to be done, and great care is to be taken by every particular servant, that he diligently minds his own business, and does not officiously meddle with that of another ; and in order that confusion may be prevented, and the Head of the family may not be dishonoured, some servants, more intimately acquainted with the Master's will and with the order of the house, hold a diligent watch, not only over themselves but their fellow servants ; for good, exhorting, reproofing, informing, reminding, and all with pure disinterested zeal, seeking not themselves, their own honour and precedence, but the honour of the great

master, and the welfare and happiness of every individual in the family. 'Tis to this service that I want thee, my dear friend, (if Providence should be pleased to grant a renovation of health) to be still more dedicated. There is a want of baptized elders among us; such as have been companions with Christ in his sufferings among us, and by us his chosen people. Thou seest what a host of messengers is sent, even from far distant parts of the earth, to awaken us to righteousness and amendment of life.—May we, the objects of their visits and of condescending favour, be willing, yea desirous to go yet deeper down into the sacred pool, there to be washed from every defilement of spirit, as well as of flesh; that so, being happily reduced to the little child's state, we may lose “the wise and and prudent,” in the reduction of self, and be in a state fit to receive the glorious mysteries of the kingdom, “revealed unto babes,” in Christ.

LETTER LVIII.

8th Mo. 1791.

THOU knowest upon what grounds, convictions and feelings thou camest, at the first,

to profess the truth ; thou knowest what it hath since done for thee, how thou hast espoused it, and with what company thou hast on various occasions been engaged in the promotion of it : and I doubt not thou still believest it to be the most inestimable treasure, which the heart of man is capable of enjoying. Be honest with thyself, as I hope, my dear friend, thou wilt be, and try whether thou hast not suffered loss ; whether for some time past there has not been a decay, instead of an increase, of divine virtue in thy soul ; and whether thy ability for service in religious society has not been greatly weakened, if not entirely lost. This perhaps thy candour and integrity will acknowledge ; but self, that partial, pernicious counsellor, self, will probably plead that loss indeed hath been sustained, but that the fault is not all thy own : that thou hast met with hard usage, improper treatment, and an unchristian spirit, in dealing, from thy brethren ; and that though thou mayest be, in some measure, wrong, it is evident that they are not altogether right. This reasoning leads to a self-complacence, and retorting ; which will only bewilder and aggravate. I would therefore, in true goodwill, and cordial desires for thy restoration

and help, recommend thee, dear friend, as much as possible, to turn out this reasoner, this interested, prejudiced counsellor, self; to look unto Jesus, the author of thy faith; to lay prostrate as at his feet; to bear his chastisements; and not only bear, but with all thy heart to desire them, as being the stripes, by which thou art to be healed: nay farther, submit thyself with a dutiful, filial submission to thy mother the church, though some of her children may seem not in the spirit of meekness, but angry with thee; be not thou moved to retaliate, but remember the pattern which the great Master set us; as saith the apostle, “For even hereunto were ye called, “because Christ also suffered for us, leaving “us an example, that ye should follow his “steps; who did no sin, neither was guile “found in his mouth: who, when he was “reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed “himself to him that judgeth righteously.” How much more then should his followers and disciples, when they have been overtaken in a fault, confess their frailty, humble themselves, and make restitution, and satisfaction, and reparation, as far as in their power? We have seen the danger of persist-

ing in a line of conduct contrary to the general sense of the brethren, and of being pertinacious in our own opinions ; how it lowers in esteem, and lays waste the service of those who were gifted and honourable men. I confess I am afraid lest the enemy of all good should make use of thy present situation and circumstances, as an engine to batter down any wall of stability and security that is left about thee, and wreak his infernal malice upon thee ; for “ Hell and destruction are never full.” O, mayest thou with full purpose of heart turn to him, who graciously visited thee in early youth, who gave thee a name and inheritance among his people, and who, if the fault be not thy own, will demonstrate that his promises are not yea and nay, but yea and Amen, and that his mercy endureth for ever.

LETTER LIX.

5th Mo. 1786.

THE national meeting was, I hope, owned in degree in the several sittings of it ; my poor spirit was favoured with being brought low, and plunged into the deeps, a state I love, because I love cleanliness ; and I desire no

other state, nor any other support or food, than what Infinite Wisdom sees fit to administer to me ; he knows our several frames and textures, and what is necessary and best for us : he is the wise potter, who knows when and how to use the fire and water, to harden, to soften, and to let the vessel stand in a preparing state for the appointed time : he is the wise householder, who at his pleasure occupies the vessel when prepared ; yet even then, when he takes it down, cleanses it afresh for use. May we, in every stage of the operation of his plastick hand, be submissive, content to remain as on our mouths, turned upside down, or standing as on the shelf unoccupied, as well as using all diligence of spirit to be in a state of readiness for any little use, which perhaps the Master may suddenly require ! His tried, experienced, faithful servants with one voice declare that he is the best of masters : and I am sure this life seems a poor, insipid, paltry round of care and cumber, vanity and folly, unless it be sweetened, animated and renewed by the spirit of Christianity entering into and among our feelings : so, my beloved, go on and prosper in thy own little way, attentive to please the husband of souls, learning of him at home, simply and

honestly doing whatever he bids thee ; not too much looking out and musing on what this or the other body will say or think, but cultivating retiredness of spirit, and attending to the gift which is in thee ; so be it.

LETTER LX.

10th Mo. 1786.

SUCH is the excellent nature of this holy power, that the more the gift is exercised (under a lively influence) the brighter it shines, the stronger it grows, and the more the precious anointing accompanies it. But unfaithfulness, disobedience, spiritual indolence, will always gradually work its decay; and then uncomfortableness, unpleasantness, uneasiness, and indeed unhappiness, crowd in from all quarters, from within and from without ; a host of foes, and our best friend and ally alienated from us. So, my dear friend, let thou and I go on quietly and softly, and feelingly, in our own little *line of life* ; if we get any little good for ourselves, let us husband it carefully, the times are poor ; but if there seems a redundancy, let it flow, nor fear to waste the ointment ; and indeed if there should be no super-abundance for our-

selves, if a famine should be in our land, yet should we be glad to handle the holy things, and of being favoured to distribute to others : for so doing, we shall certainly get enough to keep life and soul together, and as the times go, we may be very well satisfied with this, “ Thou shalt not muzzle the ox which treadeth out the corn.”

LETTER LXI.

1st Mo. 1788.

LAST night we received thine, of the day preceding, with an account of the final issue of your anxieties respecting your beloved infant, and it is the last and worst to be expected concerning her : no painful fears about her future conduct ; no danger of her entering into temptation of the enemy : no corruption of the heart, nor any internal defilement to annoy or destroy ; no cares, conflicts, and embarrassments of this world to vex and perplex her, no more pain and sorrow of body and mind, but an admittance into that kingdom which is composed of such ; into one of those mansions prepared by the Father for innocent and sanctified spirits, which, for ever happy in a new state of existence, are doubtless glo-

rified by, and are employed in glorifying for ever, the glorious Author of their being. Well will it be for us if we can but go to them. In order to which attainment, we that are continued on this stage, have a sharp and constant warfare to maintain, not only with flesh and blood, and that which is inherent in them, but some of us are called to grapple with and encounter spiritual wickedness in ourselves and in others; we have an arduous fight to maintain, and great care, caution, and diligence to exercise; else, instead of overcoming, we may be overcome of evil, and even near the end of the race, may fall and lose the prize. My beloved, thou hast received a gift for the edification of thy brethren and sisters; do not despise it nor the occupation of it, but diligently wait on thy gift, and exercise it in the simplicity according to the ability received; so wilt thou not only grow therein, but grow in favour with the great Master and with his faithful servants: thou wilt find that humility, fidelity and obedience will make way for thee in the hearts of the people, and make room for extensive service, to the increase of thy peace and tranquillity. Then, when cross occurrences fall out, and external trials beset, these

things will be received with equanimity and patience; " Shall we receive good at the hand
 " of God, and shall we not receive evil?" But, on the contrary, where there is a desire to save self and its honour, a reluctance to expose one's self and become vile; or a disqualification for service, of our own bringing on; then we are not only uncomfortable in ourselves, retard our own growth, accumulate weakness, but when disagreeable events are permitted to befall us, they appear to us clothed with terror, and ministers of divine wrath. In this view, I contemplated with satisfaction the account which I had of thy faithfulness in your late province women's meeting; had thou returned home under the load of conscious disobedience, what an aggravation would it have been to thy severe trial! But I trust a placid serenity is the covering of thy spirit, and that thou hast blessed, and wilt be enabled often to bless, that hand which mercifully giveth, and as mercifully and wisely taketh away, at his pleasure.

LETTER LXII.

11th Mo. 1788.

INDEED my heart has been made glad in the house of prayer, on behalf of the visited youth of this generation; the desire and petition of my soul has been, that nothing might be permitted to hurt them, nor to mar the work of formation in and upon them; but that they may go forward and increase in the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power: that so by and through them, under divine protection and direction, the continued backsliding of a degenerate people may, in a good measure, be stopped, and the Lord may be graciously pleased to return to the many thousands of Israel.

LETTER LXIII.

7th Mo. 1790.

I HAVE indeed abundant cause of thankfulness to our Almighty Benefactor, for his gracious protection still extended, and his safe conduct of a poor and helpless creature home to my family and friends. I have also humbly to acknowledge the daily supplies

every way afforded, “ Profitable to me for
 “ doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for
 “ instruction in righteousness.” Thus the
 rod and the staff, administered in wisdom,
 alternately rectify and regulate, assist and
 comfort; and so poor pilgrims move along
 under repeated convictions of their own in-
 firmities and insufficiency, and under a re-
 newed experience of continued mercy and
 divine aid. The yearly meeting of London
 seems like a home, or habitation to my spirit;
 I am dipped (I trust) in some degree into the
 state of the Christian cause, and engaged in
 a travail, and secret, silent wrestling, for a
 blessing on the endeavours of the faithful in
 this day for the promotion of it. This I look
 upon as my principal business there, though
 a good deal of other matter relative to church
 affairs, falls to my lot besides, and calls,
 for diligent exertion of my best abilities.
 Upon the whole, I do hope this most impor-
 tant cause gains ground, and that though
 there still remains some old, fruitless, sapless
 trees in the wood, and many towering lofty
 cedars in our Lebanon, yet a great number
 of promising young plants, hopeful saplings,
 have taken root downwards, and are shooting
 vigorously upwards. Much depends on their

preservation from any annoyance on their upright growth, and bearing each their own kind of fruit in due season.

LETTER LXIV.

11th Mo. 1790.

IT is often easier to give advice than to take it : it is easy to recommend resignation, but when the trial comes home to us, and the exquisitely tender feelings of nature are affected, then to say with the heart, “Thy will be done !” is to overcome indeed. And yet such a victory over humanity may be gained, and is often gained, by the Lord’s children in their pilgrimage through this life, and being strengthened by his love and by his power, they can in all humility and gratitude kiss the rod which chastises them, and bless the hand which, in perfect, through unsearchable wisdom, both gives and takes away. Our sympathy with thee, my dear friend, is strong, and our hope (I trust) is not of the hypocrite, which perisheth ; our hope is, that thou wilt in the Lord’s time be raised out of these glooms and pits of distress ; and having been made a witness of deliverance out of the depths of tribulation, and as

it were the belly of hell, wilt have experimentally to testify to the sufficiency of that arm of everlasting power, which could deliver in such sort, as to encourage other travellers in like tribulated paths to hold on their way.

LETTER LXV.

3d Mo. 1791.

PEOPLE may talk of the weight and influence and respectability of old age; but if younger persons do not go forth in the service, and exert themselves, the cause will suffer. I am not for dragging thee, my dear friend, from thy domestic concerns, which are various and important; but if truth gently draws thee, and whispers that a duty is to be done, I would have thee follow its leadings and secret monitions. He that made is all-sufficient to preserve; the kine indeed must be allowed to low as they go; the natural part to regret the parting with the inexpressibly tender connections left at home: but the ark of the testimony must be taken out of the land of the Philistines, out of the hands of the uncircumcised; and blessed will they be with whom it resteth.

LETTER LXVI.

6th Mo. 1791.

THE yearly meeting was large and solemn: and I hope that it was renewedly felt and experienced, that, notwithstanding lamentable declension and dimness may be acknowledged, our religious society is still owned the chosen people, among whom the lively oracles are deposited, the gifts and graces of the spirit are bestowed, and the principles of pure and genuine Christianity are professed. Declamatory speeches in the yearly meeting I think gradually decrease. I wish I could say that I think there is much increase of the authority and weight which ought to accompany the offerings of the tribes, rulers and princes of the people. But I trust things will mend: a younger sort will come forward, who being of clean hands will grow stronger and stronger, who having washed their hands in innocence, will compass the Lord's altar with acceptance, and who, being themselves consecrated by the divine anointing, will be rightly authorised and influenced to meddle with holy consecrated things.

Thou knowest that thy poor friend's chief joy is, to see that the children of the Elect Lady walk in the truth. Thou hast received an heavenly gift, let it be of whatever denomination it may ; what matters the name of it ? Attend upon it ; prize it ; it is the wisdom, which is more precious than rubies ; exercise it when the great Master bids, when he comes, calls for thee, singles thee out, and puts thee forth in any little service ; this is the way for the waters of this life's afflictions to be changed into the wine of the kingdom, and for the sorrows and perplexities of this world to be turned into heavenly joy. Nothing short of hearkened and obeying will do ; but this will do all for thee, and more than thou canst ask or think.

LETTER LXVII.

8th Mo. 1791.

THIS life is the field of battle, and our most dangerous enemies are those of our own houses. May the lamp of God in the temple of our hearts, be kept still renewed and replenished with heavenly oil, that we may have a clear sight of what is doing within us, lest we should think otherwise of ourselves than

we really are. Purity of heart is a main qualification for being of any service in the church of Christ. Let us then use all diligence to obtain and to retain this precious state. "Blessed are the poor in heart, for they shall see God;" they shall clearly discern the things which belong to his kingdom; and when they speak of them, it will be of what they have seen with their (spiritual) eyes, and what they have "Looked upon;" what has been brought by the holy spirit before their internal view, as an object of contemplation for themselves, and a subject which they are authorized to handle with clean hands, and with hallowed lips to communicate to others.

LETTER LXVIII.

11th Mo. 1791.

I LOVE to see business, the Lord's business, going forward, and the youth stepping into their lots, experimental witnesses of the power of an endless life, fresh, feeling, and full of good matter, loving their Master, and willing to give that proof of it, which he peculiarly requires, that is, to feed his lambs and his sheep. A little longer time, and we are numbered to the silent grave, in common

with all the generations which have been before us : let us then, while we *are* here, seek for help to do our duty acceptably in the sight of our great Judge ; that so at the awful day of decision, our spirits, disrobed of this mortal clothing, may hear the blessed sentence with unspeakable joy, and be mercifully separated to eternal felicity.

LETTER LXIX.

7th Mo. 1792.

I THINK it a pity that he should be so much confined, but perhaps it may be best ; some confinement causes us to enjoy liberty with a keener relish, to prize it more highly, and to be more greatful for it, as well as to endeavour to turn it to the best advantage. Time and opportunity are precious things, but very unstable and fleeting, and should be diligently improved. I suppose thou art now confined at home, and not at the general assembly at Limerick. Yet of so excellent a nature is the holy principle which we profess as the main spring of our religious movements, that distance does not always disunite ; there may be a great travail, union and communion of spirit, where there is a bodily se-

paration. “ He that is joined in spirit to the
 “ Lord, is joined to all the living.”

LETTER LXX.

2d Mo. 17th, 1791.

ON my return from——I was saluted with thy kind epistle. It was, and is, very greatful to me, and I shall esteem it a favour to be thought worthy of the continued fruits of thy friendship and little leisure. There are many cross occurrences which disquiet the mind, and if Divine Providence should, on the other hand, cast up some fresh means of consolation and refreshment, why should not we avail ourselves of his bounty? A new correspondence, like a new well opened in the course of pilgrimage and dry travel, may, under the blessing, and “ By the direction of the Law-giver,” prove comfortable and strengthening for the journey. I often think of thee, and my cogitations about thee are attended with sympathy and compassion; my mind’s eye views thee in the valley of affliction; be not restless, but remain there the appointed time, and the Lord is able to make this “ Valley of Achor
 “ (which is trouble) a door of hope.” He

can cause the ground of this same affliction to be productive of the most salutary increase, so that not only “ Shæron shall be a fold of “ flocks,” but even, “ The valley of Achor, “ a place for herds to lie down in ;” but this happy experience is for “ My people that “ have sought me,” saith the Lord. Mayest thou be strengthened then continually to seek the Lord, who in inscrutable wisdom orders or permits the close trials which sometimes beset us. I know nothing we can do more likely to benefit ourselves, and those whose welfare is nearest our hearts, than to keep diligently to an holy travail and wrestling of spirit on our own and their behalf. *Our own* prudence and policy often fail, and the influence of nature itself loses its sway, where it has all right to rule and govern ; but even the king’s heart is in the *band of the Lord*, as “ The rivers of waters he turneth it whithersoever he will.” I was pleased to hear thou wast out on church service. I am persuaded that no worldly business detains thee at home with the consent of thy will ; and I doubt not but it is (as it certainly ought to be) thy studious endeavour to get thy head, hands and feet (as I believe thy *heart* is already) loose, and become more and more the Lord’s

freeman, Remember the call, " Shake thy-
 " self (not only from the grosser and more
 " defiling part, but) from the dust, O, Je-
 " rusalem;" and loose thyself " From the
 " bands of thy neck, O, captive daughter of
 " Zion:" then will there be a putting on
 strength and the beautiful garments; then
 will there be a receiving the gift in perfection,
 and exercising it to the honour of the Giver,
 as well as to consequent sweetness and peace;
 then precious virtue is known to go forth
 from the Holy One, as through the vehicle of
 a refined and purified spirit, to others; and
 there is a rejoicing together in the great Mas-
 ter's name. Thus wilt thou more and more
 rise in the dominion of Truth, and get, in
 thy mind, over all those things which would
 agitate, and annoy, and turn aside from the
 proper centre. Thus, however useful thou
 mayest have been in civil and religious life,
 thy last days will, by the increase of living
 sap, be thy best days; thy end will be hap-
 py, and thy example live in sweet memorial
 among future generations. So be it! saith
 thy truly affectionate faithful friend.

Thy letter seemed to congratulate us on the
 return of our dear friend——; but see
 what a state of existence we are in, how

transient and uncertain. She just got to our national meeting to deliver up her certificate, gave a short simple account of their visit to the continent, spoke as if herself had been nothing and had done nothing, magnified her Master's cause in several sittings of the meeting; went to her own home, and saluted her relations and friends there; proceeded to the quarterly meeting to which she belonged, at Cork, laboured there in the authority of the gospel, and when it was over, laid down her head in peace at our friend Samuel Neale's house, at Spring Mount, 8th of 12th mo. last. Her loss, as a member both of civil and religious society, is very much regretted: but encomiums are superfluous.—If we revere her character, let us endeavour to follow her example; if we are attached to the cause which she was so eminently engaged in, let us wait for qualifications to support it, according to our several measures and stations.

— hears now and then from the neighbouring continent, and favours us with some account. We understand the precious seed sown there does not seem to be lost; we rather hope that it has taken root and is springing up: perhaps “The earth is helping the

woman :” the convulsions and revolutions in that country forwarding the establishment of the church of Christ.

I am now I see got near the end of my paper, and I feel my love to you all abound and spread; but have not left myself room to write it down : amongst others——(if still on this side heaven) possesses my affectionate remembrance.

LETTER LXXI.

9th Mo. 4th, 1791.

REMEMBERING that I was in thy epistolary debt, believe I should have written to thee of my being favoured to get well home, &c. but having been longer in debt to thy sister——I thought best to pay off that score, and hope she communicated any intelligence that was worth imparting to thee. I hope also, that the event of a personal interview is no interruption, but rather a cement of our correspondence. I have just been re-perusing thy last kind letter with renewed satisfaction, and wish to be preserved in such a humble state as to keep the unity and much valued amity of such friends: indeed much depends on being preserved in this

state, so characteristic of the great Master. A departure from it has proved the ruin of thousands; and by how much more useful and conspicuous any become in the church, so much more conspicuous should this spirit appear in them.

This spirit, if kept to, will work wonders: it is the well watered, well dug and well cultivated soil, in which the Christian virtues grow and flourish. Alas! for many in our poor society, they have chosen the barren mountains; a dry and parched soil; their roots have struck into a hard stiff clay, and they bear neither leaves nor fruit. But the great Husbandman is not unmindful of his plantation, he is sending skilful labourers into it; and not only so, but by his own immediate power he has reached divers, arrested them in their retrograde, wayward course, and brought them into the way everlasting. So that (according to my sense) there is encouragement for the faithful devoted servants to persevere; doing each his own business, and that part of the general labour which is assigned him. Some individuals may be sent on particular expeditions and services; but the discipline of the church is a general field of labour, in

which no living member is exempt from a share.

For my part ever since I became, in some measure, acquainted with the Truth, and mercifully arrived at some settlement in it, my relative duties in religious society and the share in the support of discipline, which I apprehended fell to my lot, have been among the capital weights and burthens, and exercises, and distresses, of my life. As our inward frames differ one from another, so these things are harder to some dispositions than others. They have been particularly so to me ; so that I could say with Job, “ The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.” But I have lived to see a termination of many of these conflicts ; I have lived to see captivity led captive ; rebellious children become loyal subjects ; and the opposers of truth triumphantly bearing it’s standard in the sight of it’s enemies, their former associates. Many unfaithful professors also, whom neither gentle expostulations could win, nor repeated warnings intimidate, have been summoned before another tribunal to receive their final sentence and everlasting retribution, according as their works have been.—O that such as now trou-

ble the church may awake in time to a proper sense of their state, ere it be too late, while the day of visitation lasts, and a place of repentance is yet to be found; for, by reason of frequent resistance, there may be a cessation of the strivings of grace, and the poor creature, left to itself in the hour of bitter distress, may seek and ask in vain.

I had the favour of a letter, some time ago, from our mutual dear friend——he was expecting to sail shortly in the *Pigou*. His letter was fraught with a precious cargo of love, which he commissioned me in a particular manner to distribute: it would be a valuable commission, if capacity to fulfil it were also added; like a large cargo of guineas sent from the king's mine for circulation, which enriches the person to whom it is delegated with "Dust of God."

Perhaps thou wilt let me know if there be any thing new respecting our friends on the neighbouring continent, or any other matters relative to the prosperity of the most interesting cause existing, or which ever existed, or ever will exist upon earth.

My dear friends at——I know kindly interest themselves in the welfare of me and

mine. Be so kind as to inform them, that we are generally favoured with health and tranquillity here.

LETTER LXXII.

8th Mo. 3d, 1792.

I DOUBT not but that our beloved sister — acknowledged for me the receipt of thy acceptable letter; it conveyed the sorrowful intelligence of the removal of our mutual dear friend——, and this goes charged with an account of the translation of another precious servant from works to rewards. Our well-esteemed friend and brother———, had of late years been rather on the decline, and these last three or four months grew much worse; was seized with a mortification in his foot, and notwithstanding all the medical skill and labour bestowed, departed this life 27th ult. His head had been much affected and his thoughts confused by the opiates which it was judged proper to give him; but at intervals of recollection and clear understanding, he put forth the evident sweet and savouring fruits of a sound mind; of a mind supported by divine effectual help, which enabled and

authorised him feelingly to express triumph over death, hell and the grave.

His travels in all parts of the world where our religious society was settled, at one time or other of his life, caused him to be very generally known, and the sweetness, liveliness and tenderness which accompanied his gospel labours, made him very generally beloved; so that it may be said of this Samuel also, "He died, and all Israel lamented him." My youngest child, Sarah, had for a long time been attached to him; with our free consent she was much gratified by an assiduous attendance on her honoured friend for several weeks past, and was present with him, to her comfort, at the final close. Thus "The righteous perisheth;" but I hope it cannot be said that "No man layeth it to heart." I trust these dispensations to the church, ordered in infinite wisdom, are laid to heart by many of our youth especially; and that there will be a succession of fishers, and fowlers, and hunters, who will diligently seek after, and preserve alive, the precious prey of the souls of men.

I observe that when thou favoured me with thy last, thou wast on the eve of a journey: I hope it proved prosperous, that peace was the

effect and the reward. I am glad when I hear of thy excursions in the service of truth: such exercise strengthens the spiritual constitution, and the example of those whom Providence has been pleased not only to *endow* but to *bless* with even this world's affluence, hath a powerful influence. Of how much greater weight and use must it be, when spiritual gifts are added to temporal loans? Bear with me, dear friend, and do not refuse the word of approbation and encouragement when it comes rightly to thee, or at least from a well-meaning spring: trouble and discouragement are plentiful enough.

You rich men are really to be pitied, and demand the cordial sympathy of your friends. I am thankful that there are a few of you who bid fair for escaping the woe, and entering the kingdom, though it may be through great tribulations and afflictions of divers kinds. 'Tis but holding out a little longer, and the scene of probation and conflict will be over with us all; then our spirits shall center in the mansions prepared for them. But our example may operate long after our existence here; as is said, "He being dead yet speaketh." May the cause therefore of Truth, and its precious testimonies, ever be dearer

and nearer to us than any other consideration; and let us, like faithful Abraham, (the friend of God) in our heart and will, sacrifice every natural feeling and affection to that allegiance which we owe to the supreme command and good pleasure of our great Creator, manifested to us by the spirit of his Son; this appears to be the most likely means to draw down the favour and friendship of heaven upon us, and to preserve in us a better and happier state; in *that* in which we have, under a sense of duty, offered in our hearts a sacrifice to the Lord.

Thy sister favoured my daughter with a letter not long, advising of her and —— being outward bound; I heartily wish them good speed; they are taking the high road to heaven; thus diligently exercising their gifts, and having it as their meat and drink to do the will of him who sent them. My best love follows them wherever they go, and I wish myself and family to be remembered by them for good.

I hope our mutual friend —— is well; her retreat from —— was, no doubt, melancholy, and she has intimately felt the loss of her precious friend and companion; but I trust, the cup of mourning has been sweetened to

her taste by the union and fellowship which death cannot divide. I am obliged by thy information respecting friends returned to America, &c. Shall always be obliged by any new material intelligence concerning the affairs of truth, on that, or this neighbouring continent. Remember me affectionately to my dear friends.

LETTER LXXIII.

I FEEL unity with the meeting's renewed labour with——. O what an element is divine love! in this the children of the light live and breathe, and move, and act; there is no infection here, it is clear, pure, and salutary.—I should be glad that the poor man might be effectually conquered; thou art dear to me for having so followed, and been so guided in service, as to be instrumental of good in his case. Thy prayers and thy alms-deeds, that is, thy secret wrestlings of spirit, and thy private labours and communications will, no doubt, come up in memorial.

I expect thou knowest that I received thine of the 5th ult. the contents are such as this state of existence often affords: we have indeed a cup of mixture to partake of; but

then it is wisely mixed and tempered by the great hand; it is not for us poor, blind, and ignorant creatures to say, *What doest thou?* but patiently to submit and bow in humble submission, and in a persuasion that the Judge of all the earth doeth right. It is glad tidings to me that ye are getting on so well, and no doubt, cause of humiliation and gratitude to you both, that the arm of everlasting strength has been experienced in such renewed and effectual support; there is great encouragement in this to proceed in the track of revealed duty. Many have hurt themselves, and become lame and dwarfish all their lives long, by letting in the reasoner and discourager; consulting human prudence and propriety; limiting the spirit, which is the Holy One; starting aside from services, like an affrighted horse on the road; and being in great fear where no fear is. But thou, beloved friend, seemest to have got out of the narrow ways and crooked paths on to the high road for travellers, leading to the city of the Great King; and by continuing diligent, faithful and devoted, thou wilt know more and more distinctly the Master's will, and be strengthened to perform it. Thus, if it be consistent with infinite wisdom to prolong thy

life here, thou wilt be happy in thyself and useful in the creation of God ; and if a short warning should summon thee from this conflicting state, thou art prepared, thou hast nothing to do but to die : this mortal to put on immortality ; thy sorrows here to be changed into unmixed everlasting joy ; and thy example and memorial will live and preach to succeeding generations.

LETTER LXXIV.

ALAS ! I am a poor weak creature, much more fit to be ministered to, than qualified to minister to another ; yet I was quite willing to do what I was made able to do, that is, to pray for thee ! I am glad that thou art on service ; it's the way for thee to grow strong, and to get above the little glooms and recurring perplexities which, from various causes, cast down and disquiet the soul. By being thus employed and accustomed to exercise, thou wilt become a trained servant, and be made capable to instruct others, thy fellow servants, in the duties of their places and stations ; feeding not only the lambs but the sheep of Christ.

Go on then, my dear friend ; be not afraid of the face of man, nor ashamed of the cross of Christ. I repeat, as I have often said, that nothing more glorious, more dignifying, more beneficial to mankind, or more worthy of the dedication of all our faculties to espouse and promote, was ever let down from heaven to earth. Not only true civilization of manners and sound morality, but life and immortality (that is immortal life) and eternal salvation, are made manifest through the gospel. A dispensation of which, I doubt not, is committed to thee, in order to advance, according to thy gift and measure, these glorious ends.

LETTER LXXV.

I DOUBT not thou esteemest it a favour from on high to be engaged, in the least degree, in the Lord's service. Mayest thou always keep here : low, humble, thankful for any scraps which may fall from the altar, about which thou ministers. Oh, this humility ! When shall I cease from inculcating the necessity of it to those I love ! or from praying to be preserved in it myself ? I am sensible, that though I should preach to

others, without keeping on this bottom, I may become a cast-away from divine favour.

I note thy general silence in public assemblies, I trust thou art, in a good degree, a living witness of the sufferings of Christ, who was oppressed, afflicted, yet opened not his mouth! To lose our own wills in the will of the Great Master, is the top stone of the building; then servants are in a state fit to receive orders, then the master is pleased to instruct them, and they are ready and willing to go on his errands; they take the message clearly and deliver it clearly; it carries conviction along with it, and the work is blessed in their hands.

LETTER LXXVI.

NOTWITHSTANDING the reports of the vessel being wrecked, which conveyed our dear friends ——— and —— I was for entertaining a hope that they were false, or that our said friends might be the objects of divine preservation; but further concurring relations have caused that hope to perish. Yet a well-grounded hope remains, that, that part in them which is out of the power of the elements

of nature, has been, and for ever will be, the object of divine preservation and everlasting salvation! 'Tis true, the manner and circumstances of their dissolution, appears dreadful to us! but perhaps, on the whole, not attended with greater pain to them than if they had died in the arms of their friends. Death is generally accompanied with something terrifying to human nature: a lingering death is also replete with much pain of body; this our friends were exempt from, though its very probable, for some hours they felt the horrors of their dreadful situation. They have shot the gulph! the last pinching agony is over with them! Now their near relations and the surviving friends are the subjects of our deep sympathy and tender compassion: may the Lord comfort and sustain them, and afford an adequate supply from his inexhaustible treasury! He has a remedy competent to every evil, and no depth of distress is out of the reach of his merciful relief.

LETTER LXXVII.

17th of 10th Mo. 1780.

THE near affection, esteem and respect, which I bore to thy late father-in-law, does not

permit me to seem inattentive to his family, nor to be deficient in such visible token of friendship as is in my power to give. I therefore take this opportunity of expressing my joint concern with your's for our common loss ; a loss severely felt throughout the borders of our religious society in these nations, where the report has yet spread, and is attended with peculiar regret. For as love begets love, that spirit of charity, benevolence, and brotherly kindness which so conspicuously influenced the disposition of this good man, did not fail to produce reciprocal affection towards him in others. We lament the steady, upright friend ; the pleasing, instructive companion ; the lively experienced minister ; the diligent, faithful labourer, removed from amongst us. His family, who more particularly partook of the pleasure and profit arising from such good qualities and qualifications, must doubtless, deeply feel the privation : but this sorrow will (I trust) be so tempered with resignation to the divine will, and so mingled with a comfortable hope of the happy end of the dear deceased, that there will ensue a quiet composure of mind, and sweet unity with his spirit, safely centered in its holy rest.— What remains for us is, so to pass the short

uncertain time of our sojourning here, as that we, at the close of all, may join the spirits of the blessed, never more to be separated from them. Human nature recoils with horror at the idea of everlasting exclusion from heaven and happiness, in the regions of woe and misery. And yet, if we would on any reasonable grounds expect to die the death of the righteous, and that our latter end should be like unto his, we must use all diligent endeavours to live the life of the righteous, that we may obtain at last the glorious prize, and not most unhappily misso great salvation. Religious parents, devoted as thy dear father-in-law was to the service of truth, and indefatigable in his labours for the good of others, not only purchase a blessed inheritance for themselves, but often for their successors : their pains, their prayers, their secret offerings, rise in sweet memorial, and their children and families inherit the benefit thereof ; such, I hope and believe will (through infinite mercy) be the happy experience of most of the nearest relations of my dear friend ; and some of the branches of this valuable stock, abiding the purging seasons, and submitting to the forming and turning of the divine hand, will bear fruit grateful to God and man. With these

my spirit hath unity; and I earnestly desire their preservation and perseverance in that holy path, into which the feet of their minds have been turned; that they in their day may be useful and honourable living members of the church of Christ, and that there may be a succession of testimony-bearers to that truth which was first, and will stand last upon earth. But should any of the visited children of a visited family, the offspring of religious parents, who have watched over them with tender attention, and often admonished them for their good; should any of these turn from the grace of God into wantonness, trample upon his witness in their consciences, reject the calls and invitations of his spirit, and set at nought their birthright and education, surely dangerous is their situation; they are running giddily (as it were,) on the edge of a dreadful precipice, and dallying with their destruction. With all my heart I wish that the youth amongst us were properly sensible of the magnitude of the danger of slighting, and neglecting to cultivate, the merciful visitations of heaven. That which in mercy was extended as a shepherd's crook to draw them, and help them along, will, if despised and let go, prove as an iron rod; the same sun which

in the visible creation, cheers and invigorates the living, accelerates the putrefaction of the dead. "As they did not like (says the apostle) to retain God in their knowledge," (which implies that they had once known him, and been visited by him) "God gave them over to "a reprobate mind, to do those things which "are not convenient;" and then follows a catalogue disgraceful not only to Christianity, but to humanity itself. O! may those children of my honoured friend, who from their local situation are more exposed to evil than those hopeful plants of the same house, who have partaken more of parental care and nurture; may those, though they may have wandered as into a far country, and fed on polluted and unsubstantial food, be favoured with a fresh visitation and recollection where they are, and whence they have strayed; be minded to return to their heavenly Father's house, and experience the arms of mercy stretched forth in great condescension to receive them, ere it be too late, and the door be finally shut.

LETTER LXXVIII.

19th of 2d Mo. 1771.

I CONFESS it looks hardly decent in me to make no return of this sort to two obliging

letters which I have had from thee. Thou enquirest concerning my father's health; he has had several attacks of (what is called) a bilious cholic; we were much concerned about him, but (through favour of good Providence) he has recruited finely; however, his hardly suffering himself to be taken proper care of, subjects him to the danger of a return of his disorder, and us to frequent fears respecting him; manifold indeed is the loss we shall sustain by the translation of my venerable father; but the loss of his weighty spirit, exemplary life, and lively services in our poor destitute society, would be most of all to be lamented. A cause, dear friend, worthy the attachment of the most dignified natures; a mystery so glorious, that even angels have desired to pry into it. Christianity in its purity, undefiled with the mixture of worldly wisdom and superstitious ceremonies, hath been revealed from heaven to our ancestors. They nobly stood by it, and faithfully kept that which was committed to their trust; they have rested from their labours here, and are now in the full possession of the fruits of these labours, even life eternal. There still remains the same cause to be supported in our generation; the same conflict to be maintain-

ed with the grand adversary of our happiness, and the corruptions of our fallen nature ; the same and only effectual means of victory ; and the same immortal crown at the end for him that overcometh. But where are now the combatants ? The multitude professing to walk in the way of truth, are not in the way ; they are not spiritually minded ; they mind their own things, not the things of God : hence a general indifference, as to the life and virtue of religion, has overspread us as a leprosy ; our minds are not in a state prepared for that intercourse with the divine spirit, in which consists the happiness both of men and angels. Those gifts and graces which the Father of Lights and Spirits would pour out upon the living members of his church, are withheld, and the shame of our nakedness is visible, even to them that are without. Think of this, beloved friend, and let sorrow seize thy heart, because these things are so. Open thy heart to the convictions and judgments which are the preparatory dispensation to the reception of pure and unmixed good. “ Open thy doors, O Lebanon, and let the fire consume thy cedars ! ” If I am not mistaken, thou art not altogether unacquainted with this work. Thou hast felt something of the corroding smart of judgment for evil ; thou hast

felt the gentle drawings and invitations of the spirit, alluring thee out of the friendship and familiarity of the world, and offering thee a “ place and a name in the Lord’s house and “ within his walls, better than of sons and of “ daughters.” Thou hast seen and felt the instability and uncertainty of the nearest and dearest temporal enjoyments ; and the great vacuum, the inanity, the insufficiency of worldly gratifications to satisfy the aspirations and longings of an immortal soul, have at times been opened to thy understanding and view. Mayest thou, dear friend, ponder deeply where thou art ; and whether thou hast, in a noble, unreserved dedication of all, obeyed the heavenly vision. Whether we seek great things for ourselves or not, our time passes quickly over, our places here will soon know us no more, and the Lord is determined to bring this evil (of death) upon all flesh, and that wonderful fabrick of our bodies, which he hath made, will he break down. Happy will it *then* be for those, who, their lives being spent here in humble circumspect walking, and the service of the best of masters, will have it said to them individually, “ Well “ done, good and faithful servant, enter thou “ into the joy of thy Lord.”

Excuse this freedom which I have taken on this solemn subject; a consciousness of my hearty desires for thy welfare, emboldens me to use it.

LETTER LXXIX.

BY a letter I have just now received from thy nephew, I am informed of thy great loss. Want of earlier information renders it difficult for me to attend the solemnity, which is to be on that occasion to-morrow, were there not other impediments in my way. As I could not conveniently pay that mark of friendship, I therefore thought of sending thee a few lines, expressive of my condolence and sympathy.

The pleasing disposition and engaging manners of the dear deceased, endeared her (no doubt) to many others, as well as to my wife and me; but a secret something united us to her in a close, and intimate, and feeling relation.

We loved her as a near and dear friend.— She is now released from those long infirmities, which infinite wisdom permitted her to pass through, for the trial of her faith and patience, and for her preparation for an admittance into that holy rest which nothing impure can enter. Refined and polished while

here for the company of blessed spirits, she is (I doubt not) mingled in their happy society. We remain a little longer to struggle with the difficulties and encounter the temptations which belong to this life. We are not yet putting off our harness, therefore have no reason to boast, but to dwell in awful fear. We are, some of us, the heads of families, principal persons in our places ; our precepts and our example therefore must have considerable weight and influence. How necessary is it for us then to ask wisdom of him, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not ! that by rightly fulfilling all our several duties in our families and in the church, we may, as we pass along in our journey, from time to time, have the answer in our consciences, of “ well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,” as well as *that* happy sentence at the close of this visible scene.

My mind, while I am thus engaged, is turned with tender solicitude towards thy beloved offspring ; I believe that many of them (and most probably all of them) have felt the gentle touches of the divine hand, and the invitations of the good spirit, in the secret of their souls ; drawing them from the spirit of

the world, in its manifold appearances and shapes, and begetting in them desires and aspirations after enduring substance. May they with all diligence cultivate the renewal of these tendering impressions, and in all humility submit to the operation of these cleansing baptisms, which purify the heart, and make it a fit receptacle for unmixed good.

A gracious Providence has not been wanting in his precious visitations to the youth amongst us ; but there has been a great want in them, of following on to know the Lord in the renewed experience of his humbling power, and in the further manifestations of his will concerning them. Hence the goodness of too many of them is but like the morning cloud and early dew ; it is soon superseded by a relish for the pomps and vanities of this world, and their baptismal vows are soon forgotten ; and hence a want of succession of testimony-bearers to the noblest cause, which ever did, or ever will, dignify human nature. I particularly wish for the elder branches of thy numerous, hopeful stock, that as now a greater charge devolves upon them, they may seek and wait for heavenly wisdom to direct their own steps, and influence every part of their conduct ; that so they may grow in fa-

vour with their great Creator, and in his hand be made a blessing to the younger branches of the family, assisting to train them up, by example and precept, in the life of religion, and in that plainness and simplicity which adorn our holy profession.

LETTER LXXX.

OUR meetings of discipline were held this week at Carlow. There seemed to appear some good fruits of the manifold labours taken lately; and also sorrowful cause of apprehension, lest, in some, the good seed then sown, may have, in great measure, been picked out again. However, these things must be left; those who are sent to plant and water, faithfully doing their duty, are clear; the consequential increase is of the Lord of the harvest. Indeed, in this instrumental labour, there is great need of skill, and we are poor, blind, fallible creatures. What must we do then that feel ourselves called to labour in our various departments? Ask counsel of God, be diligent in his business, and fervent in our spirits; earnestly desiring that he may keep our feet when we officiate in his house, lest following (through ignorance and mistake,

not wilful intention) the leadings of the imagination, and that which is natural, we gradually and insensibly lose sight of the spiritual guide, and the grand enemy, ever restless and on the watch, even among the assemblies of the sons of God, working in the mystery, prevail to substitute some-mixture of the creature in the place of the true light. In such case, when the mind of the minister, in the exercise of his gift, is imprest with some little fear or jealousy, lest the right guide is disappearing and the imagination, the natural part, is taking its place, I believe it is best to pause, to recollect, to endeavour to let the flutter and commotion subside, to be still, and wait to know what is of God; and accordingly, as the Holy Evidence speaks peace or otherwise, in this silence of all flesh, proceed, or desist, always bearing in mind, that too little said, may often be supplied; but too much can hardly be remedied.

I doubt not, my dear friend, that thou hast long anticipated me in reflections and observations of this sort, though I thus indulge an unpremeditated freedom of dropping what unexpectedly occurs. I shall be sorry to give thee pain or uneasiness, which is far from my intention, for I have, according to

my small measure of feeling, true unity with thee, and cordial brotherly affection with thee ; but, as we are beset on every side with danger, a hint or caution, as from one child to another, may at times do no harm ; and I think I know so well thy honest, humble heart, that thou wilt take this in good part, though from a brother of a lower degree ; for though the whetstone itself cannot cut, yet it is of use to sharpen the iron which can cut.

I suppose thou hast heard long before, or I would be cautious of being the messenger to thee, of the decease of our dearly beloved friend and elder brother in the truth, Wm. Hunt, who departed this life at Newcastle, after his return out of Holland. The instrument employed for his release, from works to rewards, was the small pox. His companion, I understand, not having had that disorder, durst not approach him in his illness, which was short. Who can but feel for his tender weakly wife and numerous family of children ! so far distant indeed, but still only on another spot of the Lord's footstool, and doubtless, if the fault be not their own, objects of his peculiar notice and protection. Thou mayst remember at the opportunity which was in ——'s parlour, at the time of last Pro-

vince meeting at———with what baptizing power the dear man spoke concerning some then present, who would soon be released from their deep and bitter baptisms, and received into a glorious place of reward : very probably the testimony might in part belong to himself. The great Controuler of events knows what is best for all, and each of us ; and to his ordering we must submit. A little time numbers us too, that survive, to the silent grave ; happy for us, if by keeping near the appointed means of help (the all-sufficient grace of God), we may be enabled to fill up our several duties here, so as to obtain a place of rest and everlasting repose for our weary tribulated spirits hereafter.

LETTER LXXXI.

I RECEIVED thy last and attended to the contents with a mind impressed with sorrow ; indeed sorrow and trouble are at times spread before me, on account of the situation of things in our religious society. What is the reason that many educated amongst us, should be such enemies to the truth they profess ? Yea, the bitterness and enmity of their spirits (like thick darkness) is to be felt.

What must be opposed to those fiery darts? for my part, I know nothing more likely for the honest-hearted to defend themselves and preserve their own spirits, nor to overcome the agents of the wicked one withal, than the power of gospel-love. This, if deeply and patiently kept to, will work wonders; this is invincible, and it's armour impenetrable. But if this be in any measure departed from, or adulterated with self-love (which is the parent of resentment), it causes a breach in the panoply (the whole armour) of God, who is love, and so leaves some weak part unguarded to be wounded and hurt. If any therefore have been injured or hurt in this way, to a deep and steady search after the healing virtue of divine love, I would earnestly recommend them; and as this becomes operative, and predominant in the mind, it will influence to say, and do these things, and these only, which make for peace; and I am in the belief, that if patiently kept to, it will bear down all before it, and, in due time possess the gates of it's enemies.

LETTER LXXXII.

I AM glad that thou meetest with that respect and attention which may, in some measure, compensate the loss of domestic endearments. Indeed there was hardly a doubt but this tribute would be paid thee. People of good breeding and good sense would hardly be deficient in this respect. On thy part I am persuaded thy faculties are exerted to manifest that thou art not undeserving of the marks of friendship shewn thee. A liberal mind is grateful to a high degree; and this contention between benefits and gratitude has something very noble in it. Thou strivest, my dear friend, I doubt not, to be accomplished in a still superior stile, in order for thy own improvement, and for a capacity to acquit thyself, in thy station, with greater eclat; for this purpose thou readest, thou writest, thou conversest: but, here it seems to me that a danger may attend.——Accumulated knowledge is apt to puff up, and that beautiful simplicity of manners into which truth leads, may be unhappily departed from. The world has it's own customs, and also it's own language and terms; delicacy,

politeness, refinement, sentiment, are capital words in it's vocabulary, but of very equivocal meaning : the spirit of the world is utterly wrong and in direct opposition to the spirit of genuine Christianity, as the new Testament abundantly every where testifies. The possession of the qualities implied in those terms, even in their fairest sense, the treasure of literary acquisitions and polite accomplishments, however useful in their places, are not the essential good ; are not the one thing absolutely needful, " That good part which" the Master, who knew the heart, knew that " Mary had chosen," and was " graciously pleased, for her encouragement, " to promise, that it should not be taken from " her." May thou, my dear friend also, in thy day and sphere of action, surrender thy heart, so to be mollified and modelled by the Master's power, so made clean and right, that he may view it with acceptance and approbation ; thus the fountain being made good, and kept with all diligence, out of it are witnessed to flow, the issues of life : the natural and improved qualifications being sanctified, and the spiritual gifts super-added, human nature arrives at it's perfection ; man then is made (but) little lower than the angels,

being crowned with glory and honour. This is what is held out to us, the prize most worthy to be contended for, the favour of God, infinitely preferable to the favour of vain unstable man. Well deserving our attention is that saying of our Lord, “Ye are they which
 “justify yourselves before men, but God
 “knoweth your hearts; for that which is
 “highly esteemed amongst men, is abomi-
 “nation in the sight of God.”

LETTER LXXXIII.

THOU hast been of late so much the companion of my thoughts, and the subject of my good desires, that it has weighed with me, whether it be not a kind of duty for me to write to thee. I hope I am not very forward to write or speak about the most solemn things in a cursory way (and my own stock is so small, that I would not, willingly, be lavish of it unnecessarily), but where can be the harm of sometimes communicating one's feelings with a friend, and stirring up the pure mind by way of remembrance of those things, which the hurry and cumber of this world, the inattention and distraction of our thoughts, the depravity of our nature, the allurements of

our passions, and the workings of a potent insidious adversary upon them, are too apt to detach us from, and cause us too frequently to forget.—I love thee, dear friend, and thy father's house, with a sincere affection. I wish you all the blessings and comforts of this life, and a better life; and from those sensations which, in my hours of retirement, I have found in my own mind. I believe, that the good will of heaven flows in a strong current towards you : may nothing in any of you divert or check it's progress. It will qualify your spirits for the enjoyment of the goods of this life with the most grateful relish; it will support you to bear the evils of it with the noblest fortitude, and will finally conduct you (if you leave yourselves to be conducted by it) into the regions of unmixed and everlasting happiness. This precious favour is indeed universal in it's extent and operation; but has more powerful effect and more general influence upon those who receive and believe in it, who are living witnesses of it's virtue and efficacy; waiting continually for the fresh supplies of it, to enable them to discharge a conscience void of offence towards God and man.

Among these too, this holy principle of saving grace, is wont to operate with peculiar force on the minds of such as are, as it were, in the spring of life. It is the seed time, which, if well improved, will be succeeded by the warm beams of divine favour, and the harvest will be to present advantage, as well as to everlasting life. As I doubt not, dear friend, of thy having been thus visited in the early part of thy days, from an intention of gracious Providence to pre-engage thy affections to himself and the cause of his blessed truth, before the world; it's spirit and it's connections should engross thee in mature age. I am earnest, that the living sense of good, begotten in thy heart, may not perish, as in the womb of formation; but nourished by divine virtue, may grow, and in the fullness of time, be brought forth to the praise of God, the edification of others, and the great consolation of thy own soul. But suffer me, dear friend, to say, a little thing hurts that which is young and tender, the very jots and tittles of the law and the testimony of Jesus are to be maintained, or the whole bond of his peace is broken. He that is not faithful in the little, will not be made ruler over much. That line is to be preserved invi-

olable, which divides the children of the kingdom, from the children of this world; their language, their manners, their aspect, their outward demeanour and habit, as their country, is different. It hath seemed meet to infinite wisdom to characterize his people by visible marks, and I am bold to say, they will never prosper in true religion according to the extent of his gracious designs upon them, who violate those marks of distinction and respect. The Nazarite is known not only by his temperance, but his exterior appearance.

LETTER LXXXIV.

8th of 1st Mo. 1787.

I RECEIVED thy sundry letters, and gave all the attention which was likely to be paid by a feeling and interested friendship to their various contents. I expected to have written from Waterford, to my dear friend, thy afflicted sister, but I could not compass it, though I repeatedly tried for it; however, I did you all justice in another way; I hope sympathy of the best kind was experienced by me while I was there. That tender sympathy, which, in the mystery of spiritual uni-

ty, helps to bear the infirmities of our beloved friends, and ministers strength and consolation to them in the hidden life : that sympathy in which fresh and earnest petitions are secretly put up to Him, who sees and knows the deep and pungent distress of his poor creatures from various causes ; and who only can, effectually, relieve them. Indeed, my dear friend, many and various are the distresses of our fellow creatures of the human species ; and I love to feel for them and with them, though I am not at all personally acquainted with them. Mankind is at all times very near my heart, and I think it alien from humanity, as well as Christianity, to be insensible to the sufferings of any. Thy beloved sister's trouble is great indeed, her trial is acute and poignant, but if she compares it with the calamities, the pains, the embarrassments, the distresses of body and mind, which many labour under, without experiencing proper care, pity, or assistance,—multitudes, like poor Lazarus, oppressed with want and disease, and numbers like the rich man, in a still worse condition, living as without God in this world, and just about entering into the everlasting torments of the next ; if she compares her situation with these, how great is

the balance of gratitude on her side of the account. Many are the considerations and circumstances which preponderate in favour of a humble patient resignation to the divine will: this sweet child was removed in innocence, she has escaped the dangers and temptations of this stage of existence; she has escaped the horrors of eternal misery; her pure spirit (we have cause to believe) is for ever centered in uninterrupted joy. She was taken off, not by her parents bringing a disorder upon her when in perfect health, but by the visitation of sickness, brought on, or permitted, by Him, who bears rule on earth as well as in heaven, and does all things right and well. If it had been consistent with infinite wisdom, that the sweet babe should have continued longer in this life, and that its near connections should not have had this grievous affliction, Omnipotence, no doubt, would have ordered accordingly, and the present dispensation would not have been at all allotted to you. Or if it had been consistent with the same wisdom that the chastisement should have been less severe, the same power could have prevented those circumstances from attending, which embitter the sensations arising from this sorrowful event; so, on

looking every way at it, there appears nothing remaining, but in a child-like state submissively kiss the rod, and patiently resign to the divine will. And that this may be your happy experience, is my sincere desire; that whether the Lord Almighty gives, or withholds, or takes away, his name may be blest and sanctified among you.

LETTER LXXXV.

23d of 1st Mo. 1763.

WHEN I am led to believe that our forefathers, in the last century, were called to hold forth again in their lives and principles that most holy faith, (even Christianity in its purity) which Christ Jesus taught to his immediate followers, and established on earth, to remain to the end of the world;—when I ponder that we are the successors in the same faith of those dignified ancestors, and illustrious sons of the morning of our day, and that the same cause is now committed to us, to be maintained in the same spirit and by the same power; I say, when these things are brought under my solid reflection, I am, at times, weighed down under a sense of the awful station I am placed in by the wisdom

of Providence, even to be a professor of this religion of Christ; so that I am ready to say, "How dreadful is this place." If then it is so awful a matter to profess this holy religion, as a private member of society, how much more so must it be to be set apart as a chosen vessel to convey the quickening virtue of it to others? How great degrees of purity and holiness are requisite here, not only in a private capacity to be enabled to set an example of performing the will, but also in public and private to declare the whole counsel of God? These have not only the temptations to grapple with, which are incident to all in general; but as they are of particular use in carrying on this glorious work, the grand opposer of it plays his engines in a particular manner against them, and forms schemes deeply laid in the mystery of iniquity, that if he cannot utterly destroy their faith, he may render them less useful than infinite wisdom intended, and rob them, in some part, of the weight of their present and future crown, and the church of the benefits which might accrue from the perfections of the gifts and graces bestowed upon them. It is this enemy's grand employment, dear friend, to be constantly endeavouring to defile the vessel,

through which the divine intelligence is at times communicated to the people, and divine life conveyed; for there is no other excellence required in the instrument, but that it be clear and clean. It seems to me as though he had principally three ways by which he strives to effect this purpose. First, he would so hurt the vessel, or pipe, as that none at all of this precious liquor should enter it: but that which once was a vessel of honour should be laid aside as useless. Secondly, there is danger lest the vessel, though in a good measure clean and free from filth of any kind, for want of being sufficiently imburied with the savour of the liquor passing often enough through it, should impregnate and adulterate the liquor with some quality inherent in, or accidental to, the vessel itself. And, lastly, the pipe may be polluted by the sediments of this same precious liquor, which should be entirely cleansed out, or will be like the manna gathered yesterday, and loathed by those whose health and appetite is good, and who can only be satisfied with wine well refined off the lees. I doubt not, dear friend, but thou hast anticipated in thy own knowledge and experience any broken hints which I can offer on this subject, though I thus in-

dulge an inclination of freely communicating my sentiments to thee. I own I do, above all things, love this most noble cause, our holy religion ; and I do believe that thou, (among many others) hast been called and qualified to bear public testimony to it. I fear also, that several who have been thus called, have, by one means or other, been prevented from coming up in that degree of burning and shining lustre which was intended, and so our poor society has missed the benefit (which it so greatly wants) of the full degree and measure of instrumental help designed it, to its very great and apparent loss. My heart's desire is, that all of us, who are touched with a sense that those things are so, may diligently wait at the fountain-head of wisdom and strength, that we may, by fresh supplies from thence, be enabled to come up nobly in the stations, severally allotted to us; neither going before, nor staying behind our proper ranks ; not going forth in the arms or habit of another, nor in the presumption of strength aforetime experienced ; but with the effectual (though to ourselves and others) seemingly slight and contemptible weapons, which, for the time being, it shall please divine wisdom to furnish us with. So shall the

Lord's strength be made perfect in our weakness; our own souls comforted and encouraged to go on, trusting in the sufficiency of every present supply; and the church be edified by successful labour. I commit us both to him, who alone can preserve us alive in the root, and in his own time make fruitful in the branches. I do very sincerely desire thy preservation, stability and advancement in thy own particular, and in a capacity to be more and more serviceable in the general; and am, in true brotherly affection, thy faithful friend.

LETTER LXXXVI.

THE religion of some seems to consist in a remembrance of former experience, a rational understanding of our principles and the discipline of the church, a personal communication with divers of the foremost rank, and some faculty for speaking and writing on religious subjects; when in the mean time, for want of looking and living at home, for want of watching unto prayer, and waiting for renewed ability to offer the daily sacrifice on the fresh raised altar, insensibility and incapacity gather strength, and leanness enters into our souls.

LETTER LXXXVII.

16th of 7th Mo. 1782.

I TAKE very kind, and as a mark of friendship, thy advising me of the removal, as well as the birth of thy first-born. We naturally look about for those we love, to communicate with them our joys and our griefs. Among the many alleviations of the miseries of human life, good and benificent Providence has appointed one, called sympathy, by means of which, our happiness is increased and our sorrow lessened, in the diffusing and dividing. Good and gracious and kind indeed is he, with whom we have to do ; he knoweth the acuteness of our feelings and the sensibility of our hearts : “ He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men ;” and yet he sees meet to prove and try us, with causing in our minds sensations of exquisite pain. Thou art a man of reason and religion ; and it seems superfluous to suggest to thee those considerations, which might with propriety be thrown before many others, such as that the Almighty Controuler of the universe, does all things well ; that he only knows what’s best for us ; that

he afflicts with paternal chastisements for our good ; that these crosses and troubles are often concealed mercies and special favours ; that in any case, it is highly dangerous, as well as improper, to repine at the ordering of infinite wisdom, and particularly in the case of a youth removed out of a vain, a perilous, and troublesome world, in his innocence ; when it is so uncertain how he would escape the temptations, snares and pollutions which might annoy his longer life, and endanger his everlasting happiness. In reflections, such as these, thou hast (I doubt not) anticipated me ; but after all is said, which can be said, or read, or written, unless our merciful Creator pours in the wine and the oil to our wounded spirits, unless he visits with divine consolation, and raises with divine support, we shall never know true and solid comfort, help and strength to our poor minds, under the pressure of the evils and infirmities which flesh is heir to. May we be favoured to get low enough, conformed to our great pattern, that so we may more and more closely company with him, during the remainder of our pilgrimage, witnessing fellowship in his sufferings, and being more and more baptized and qualified to fill up our several stations in

his church. If this perishable life be desirable for any thing, surely it is for this, that we may be made instrumental in our generations, to propagate, to shew forth, to spread by our lives, our conversations, and the gifts and talents which may be bestowed, the glorious gospel which bringeth salvation among men.—Time is assuredly short to us all; during this short time we have only to labour. Retribution is at the end. As our works, so shall our rewards be. If we can be termed by the Just Judge, “Good and faithful servants,” we shall enter into the joy of our Lord. May we set this prize, and keep it steadily in view, my dear friend.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

8th of 9th Mo. 1780.

THE riches of this world, accumulated even by honest industry, without having the Great Disposer of all things in the view, and acting above the affairs of this life in his holy fear, are often the means of inexpressible perplexity and disquiet, sometimes of the most dreadful evils. Whereas, a looking, a leaning, an humble dependance on him that feeds the ravens, and on the concatenation of the

events ordered by his Providence which caused the ravens to feed his prophet, is the way to procure divine blessing to be superadded ; and prevents that sorrow, that uneasiness, that restlessness, that insatiable avidity, which worketh death to the innocent, happy, composed life. But though I thus indulge a freedom of writing, I think I well know both your hearts, and that they are in that place, where treasures of a far more noble kind than any which this world can afford, are laid up for the poor in spirit, the simple and honest hearted, and for those who think little of themselves, can say little for themselves, yet are diligent in waiting for ability to walk in that way which leads to life everlasting. We have each of us our foibles as men and women, and have each of us occasion to be industrious in watching unto prayer, that the droppings and distillings of good may fall upon our branches ; strengthening and fructifying the holy plant, and destroying by its sacred virtue and influence, or at least correcting those frailties of the flesh, which, like messengers of satan, are at times sent to buffet even those who are well-minded, and in a good degree partakers of divine regard and notice.—Man is a complex machine, compos-

ed by the wonderful Architect, of various parts interwoven together; body, soul and spirit. The body requires outward food to sustain its outward substance: the living soul must be kept alive by inward sustenance, conveyed into it from his fulness: the spirit, or rational thinking part, should be regulated by that reason which distinguishes the human capacity from that of other animals; this reason is also God's gift, and by no means to be slighted or rejected. If we neglect a proper care of our bodies, disorders will hurt them: if we omit to seek for spiritual nourishment, our souls will be in danger of perishing: and if we exercise not our reason to cultivate and improve our natural understandings, to reform and correct wrong habits and propensities, and to form us and our manners so as to be pleasing and profitable members of society, our spirits may, in our progress through life, contract dispositions, which in course of time may be inveterate and hard to be removed; dispositions which will much disqualify us for filling our several departments in life with propriety, and with ease and satisfaction to ourselves and others.

LETTER LXXXIX.

16th of 4th Mo. 1768.

WE lost my dear mother the day after thou and I parted. I believe she longed to be released from her house of clay, and made a happy exit : I trust also, that her righteous spirit is gathered to and united with the innumerable company of the faithful of the generations that are gone before ; who had, many of them, little name or fame, or visible property among men, but are now enjoying an eternity of happiness ; while those who had their portion in this life, and lived in forgetfulness of the Great Giver, have met with a dismal reversion.

My father still keeps his own house, employs himself with the land, and comes more frequently to us than he used.—He is a favoured man and knows where best help, under every defficulty, is to be had. He is like one of the old patriarchs that digged a well, and so has water of his own labouring for, to drink of.

LETTER XC.

4th of 9th Mo. 1768.

MY leisure from the duties of necessary business is small, and this leisure is (I hope) in a good degree occupied by the weightiest engagements in life. There is a species of self-love or self-preservation, which it is not only lawful, but absolutely necessary for us all to be possessed with; that is, each to take heed to ourselves. *Here* is uncertain, and *hereafter* is everlasting. We should therefore diligently endeavour to improve every fleeting opportunity whilst here, to secure an hereafter of happiness. The husband a part and the wife a part, have each to work out (by diligent faithful labour) this momentous task of their souls salvation, and to know it going forward with their day of renewed visitation.

—The world is deceitful; its friendship is not to be trusted; its assistance to us, in the hour of distress, is vain. Religion (which is no other than acquainting ourselves with God, and witnessing the peace which results from that communion) is the help and ornament of life, the hope in death, and the perpetual reward of its votaries in the world to come. Let us be roused, my dear friend, by

the calls of the spirit, by the invitations of the church, by the work of the day, and by the necessity of the times, more and more to devote ourselves to the cause of Christ, and his holy undefiled religion and way of worship of God, and of walking before men, which the blessed Author established on earth by his precepts and visible example; and which (after a long night of apostacy) our fore-fathers, in the last century, were raised and enabled by power on high, most nobly, firmly and faithfully to revive and maintain. Great and lamentable is the declension and blindness which has happened in our time, to the successors of those honourable worthies, professors of the same everlasting precious faith. Our city is not only closely besieged by enemies from without, but there are virulent enemies, hostile confederacies, deceitful allies, and weak defenders, even within the verge of its walls. The head (the skill and understanding) is in a great degree sick; and the heart (the courage and zeal) is faint. May the consideration of these things sink deep into our souls, and take root there; let it cover our minds in secret, as sackcloth within upon our flesh. Being dipped into sympathy with the seed under oppression, and

dwelling in the house of mourning therewith, we shall witness our hearts made better, our inward man to be strengthened, and an offering prepared in us, which will be a sacrifice of atonement for past delinquencies, and an oblation acceptable in the sight of God. To his holy keeping I heartily commend thee, and to the visits of his quickening grace and good spirit. May it be the main employment of our lives, to seek to dwell under the renewed influence of it !

LETTER XCI.

30th of 10th Mo. 1768.

I RECEIVE, with much satisfaction, the account of the increase of thy family. May there be increase of pure fear and diligent waiting for the sense of divine favour ; so there will be an increase of that blessing which maketh rich in faith, and abounding in good works. If there be any earnest desire for our own preservation, if any anxious concern for the Christian cause, if any humble willingness and care to make some return for all the favours of our common benefactor, *this day* calls for the dedication of all to him who has given us all that is good, and is over

all, blessed in himself, and the source of all our blessings, now and for ever.

LETTER XCII.

4th of 4th Mo. 1769.

I NOTE thy incertitude about settling, and that thy desire is to be directed aright. Human projects and prospects formed by the best share of mere reason are very fallacious; and who expects or looks for any better direction in matters of such a nature? Too few indeed have a right to expect any better: and yet my belief is, that if we were so happy as to be enabled to be inward enough in our minds, we should be favoured with a sense of what we ought to do and leave undone, in affairs which seem (many of them) rather of a temporal than spiritual nature: as the great apostle says, “He that is spiritual judgeth *all things*.” I wish for thee, dear friend, and for thy brother — to grow in this spiritual life; that as divine Providence has blest you with the affluence of the good things of this world, we may deeply ponder how the residue of the few, fleeting, uncertain moments may be best employed, so as to possess sweet peace while here, and insure an eternity of uninterrupted happiness hereafter. We are not

all called to one office ; nor placed in one particular station in the body ; but we are all called to that life of simplicity, self-denial, plainness, humility, and holiness, of which the great Author of Christianity set us and left us an example ; and having felt of the virtue which proceeds from an union with him, we are called to shew forth an example of his nature by our conduct amongst our brethren and sisters, the great fraternity of mankind, where ever we converse among them.—The greatest part (I suppose) of thy juvenile days has been spent among a numerous acquaintance in —— : thy good sense and active natural understanding have doubtless influenced thee to remark the beginnings, the lives, and the ends of divers of them, and thou hast said in thy heart, the religious man alone is happy. According to my best sense * * is the place for thee, or its neighborhood, to spend the most of thy future days in : and may our common gracious Parent so reduce thee by his power, so fit thee by his wisdom, so furnish thee by his strength, that thy latter days, as well as mine, may be better than the former part of our lives, more steadily feeling after good, more plentifully enjoying it, and more diffusely spreading the influence of it !

LETTER XCIII.

7th Mo. 1769.

BY good education and good example they may become very valuable members of society, and reflect honour upon us all. But if the seeds of pride and vanity, if indifference and insensibility about the most important matters be cherished, instead of being carefully watched and picked out, they may miscarry in the primary and essential points, as 'tis to be feared others have done before them; and then, what signify all the riches and grandeur of this fading, transitory life? "What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Children in general (and children of such promising parts in particular) are a very important, arduous charge; the subjects of solicitous, weighty care; a forcible momento to us to be living, powerful lessons of example to them; co-inciding, and co-operating with the precepts, cautions and restraints, which as we steadily and singly wait for it, the Author of all our right abilities may be pleased to furnish us with wisdom to administer, in their place and season. Even the heathen poet was sensible of the for-

cible effect of example on children, when he says, “*Maxima debetur pueris reverentia.*”

LETTER XCIV.

8th Mo. 1769.

I HAVE many warm wishes for some of — children ; they are near and dear to me. Indeed I cannot help rejoicing at times, at the beautiful prospect there is even among my own acquaintance, and within that (comparatively) narrow circle of a number of devoted youth, who are caught in the gospel-net, whose eyes growing dim as to the splendour and gaiety of this world, who have been happily enamoured of sovereign beauty and excellence, and have in their hearts chosen that good part, which I heartily pray may never be taken (by the adversary or his agents) from them.

LETTER XCV.

9th Mo. 1769.

I MAKE no doubt but thou hast had thy head, heart, and hands much engaged about our friend —’s troubles. We could not be unconcerned in a matter so affecting to a fa-

mily, for whom we entertain a particular regard. We owe him the sympathy of our spirits; and for ourselves we may extract instruction and caution from his misfortune.— There is teaching in it. This world is fluctuating and unstable, and its riches uncertain and perishing.—It is but a passage for us to another country, which is unchangeable, and where our lot will be fixed and permanent.— Great then certainly should be our care, that we travel steadily in the right road, which leads to perpetual happiness; and that we lay up for ourselves treasures which wax not old, and riches which admit not of fortuitous diminution, or decay. These, or such like I doubt not, are the solid reflections which thou hast often had occasion to make, on observing many events of this kind. May they all work together for good to our afflicted friends, and to us who bear a part in their affliction.

LETTER XCVI.

2d Mo. 1770.

HOW my poor mind delights to see the children of the heavenly Father coming forward in the experience of his love; bowing

under his refining, purging power, and submitting their necks to the yoke of Christ!—Some such I think we have in this village, to my great consolation in the midst of a variety of distress which I have to pass through, and with these I have near unity and fellowship; indeed, my dear friend, where there is not something of this savour to be felt, conversation and company is to me often very insipid. When I had the pleasure of being under thy hospitable roof, there did not open much way for converse of this sort; nevertheless, I could not but, with particular satisfaction, observe thy willingness to dedicate thy abilities to the service of the church there. I am glad thereat, because I believe it to be an acceptable sacrifice, when we offer and render up our best, though the best seems to us of little value. Let us continue, dear friend, to hold ourselves ready to do any little service which may be required of us: let us diligently wait, and fervently pray for wisdom, that we may ever be preserved, doing all we can, in our little sphere of action, for the truth, and nothing against it: that so we may obtain the blessing, which alone can sweeten the cup of life, and even takes away the bitter from the cup of death.

LETTER XCVII.

3d Mo. 1770.

I DON'T love dealing in hyperboles when I am about writing sober sense in prose ; and besides I know that it is not politic to be too lavish in commendation. ——— is near my heart in my best seasons : she bends to the root of life, and is engaged to make a sacrifice of one little thing after another, sacrifices which do not cost her nought ; but which are made in the cross to the natural inclination, and however trivial or unnecessary they may seem to some, are accepted of him by whom our actions are weighed. O these little foxes ; what prejudice they do to the tender vines ! Be it our care, my dear friend, to take them, to lay our hand upon them when we see them in ourselves and families ; for they have done much hurt in the vineyard. We see none of those who suffer and indulge them, come forward in strength and goodly stature, bearing fruit to the praise of the good Husbandman, and the help and edification of others : but as empty vines bringing forth fruit to themselves, to whom cannot be

applied that encouraging expression of the apostles, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

LETTER XCVIII.

3th Mo. 1770.

PEOPLE are too apt to dwell upon the disagreeable part of a character; they do not make sufficient allowance for difference of humour, temper, opinion, &c.—Too many are not satisfied with feeding on this serpent's meat themselves, but they hand of it to others: the wife often, for want of better conversation, gives of it to the husband; he to his associates; and so the sweet harmony of good neighborhood is spoiled; there is no cordiality of affection; and the friendship is only nominal, (*concordia discors.*)—The precious truth, which is the panacea of human life, is the only effectual remedy for this evil; as it prevails in the mind, it teaches (and qualifies too) to *love as brethren*. May this root of life eternal life, my dear friend, more and more fasten in the ground of our hearts. We shall now in the meridian, and if we live to the decline of life, we shall still find this our best and surest support. Our ever swerving

from it was the original cause of our past errors, and the troublesome consequences which attend them. On our regaining it depends our present, and the earnest of our future real, happiness.

LETTER XCIX.

6th Mo. 1770.

I WAS glad to hear that ye got something done with those litigious people at ——. Perhaps if the root of bitterness be not entirely eradicated, yet what is left may die in the ground. Cut a thing often down when it springs up, and it weakens its very root, and at last it decays. However the less thanks to them who will not help themselves; who bind heavy burdens upon others, and will not lend a finger to remove them; the less they will feel in themselves of the blessing which attends peace, and the conciliators of peace. Indeed I think it a happy circumstance, that there is no more litigation than there is, among those who profess with us; so few have about them the healing virtue which is most efficacious in these disorders; because so few press through the crowd of opposing things, with humility and faith to touch the

lowest skirt of his garment, from whom virtue proceeds. I lament, dear friend, that a cause of the greatest importance to mankind, should be so voluntarily deserted by many to whom the Almighty has been manifold in his liberality, whose situation and whose talents, properly disciplined and sanctified, might render them serviceable in the church of Christ, while they are vilely prostituted to the world ; at the same time that a multitude sit down contented with a bare profession of belonging to a society, whose principles they are very little acquainted with, and to whose fame and character (which should be bright and illustrious among the nations) they add very little, if they take not away very much from it by their visible conduct. Yet, thanks to the merciful Creator ! who has not wholly repudiated his people, though they have in the general suffered themselves to be defiled by other lovers ; there are to my certain knowledge (and I rejoice in the prospect of it) divers up and down, whose names are respectable among men, who yet have given up these names to serve as volunteers on the side, and under the banner of Christ. I know upon what ground I speak it. Though separated in body from some of them, I am not so

in spirit. In my hours of retirement I have repeatedly found them, and thee also, my dear friend, among them. I speak not only of past, but of late feelings. Some indeed have not advanced with that steady pace which becomes those who rank with the Lord's host, and wear his eternal badge : they have received of his bounty, and said they would enlist in his service ; but not being frequent enough among their fellow-soldiers, nor sufficiently observing their Captain, and keeping near the standard, they have halted (as between two opinions) fallen back, and lost ground : so came not forward in the service which was designed, for want of learning the exercise and discipline at home, and meeting frequently with their fellows in rank abroad.

“ *Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.*”

LETTER C.

9th Mo. 1770.

I FEEL a nearness which words cannot fully set forth, and which I believe would not be felt, if we were not in measure preserved to be near the truth. The Lord grant that it may ever be the bond of our fellowship, and then our friendship will not be only nom-

inal and worldly, but we may be of use and strength to each other in some of the conflicts which belong to this difficult, dangerous state of existence ; and many indeed are the conflicts and besetments which appertain to it. Our own safe stepping, and the preservation of our families, much depend upon keeping near their chiefest good ; then a wider circle, the welfare of the Christian society, of which we are members ; and a farther anxious concern for the happiness of our brethren and sisters, the whole race of mankind the world over, to whom we are very closely allied ; being all made of one blood by the same great hand. Too many spend little thought about these arduous engagements and relative duties ; but for my part, I think it is highly becoming a rational mind to look forward towards a future existence, and labour diligently after obtaining an evidence, an earnest of an inheritance everlasting, incorruptible, and full of glory ; seeing that our stay here is so short, so uncertain, and attended with manifold troubles.

LETTER CI.

10th Mo. 1770.

HEALTH is an invaluable blessing; yet even the want of it has its use. By that (or rather for that) we are deeply bound in gratitude to the Giver of every good and perfect gift: by this we are deeply humbled under a sense of the weakness and misery to which our nature is liable, and we feel a necessity to prostrate ourselves in humble application to him, in whom is all sufficient help. I hear since thy last, that poor —— has made his exit. These documents (as thou justly remarks) should quicken our attention to a timely preparation. Indeed there is manifold wisdom in the frequent contemplation of this great event: it helps to humble, to rescind the too great luxuriance of a sportive imagination, to form in us a right comparative estimation of the present and the future, to wean our attachment from a place, where we are to have so short and uncertain a residence, and incite us diligently to seek for an earnest, a well grounded hope, an assurance of an inheritance among the saints in light.

LETTER CII.

11th Mo. 1770.

SINCE I received thine, I have attended the national meeting, and from what I experienced in sundry of the sittings thereof, am still more confirmed in sentiment, that the glory, life, power (or by whatever name we may call that which was wont to overshadow the assemblies of our predecessors) has greatly departed from us, collectively considered in this day. It is a reflection which should cover our spirits with mourning; for no nation, or people, or individual person, can suffer a more intimate loss, than the loss of divine favour. It should also deeply engage such of us as have been mercifully preserved, yet to feel some little stirrings of life, to cherish, with all diligence, this precious sense, that it may more and more increase in our hearts; and by its spreading, expanding nature, catch hold of our nearest connections, and kindle still more widely the sacred flame. As long as we are a church militant, there will be, as there have been, wrong spirits to conflict withal. It needs must be, that offences come. But by these encounters ma-

ny virtues and ornaments of the Christian church (the Lamb's wife) are manifestly exercised; wisdom, temperance, meekness, patience, long-suffering, &c. Oh, 'tis much to be lamented, that there is such a declension from the spirit, and life and power of Christianity, in those called to revive the profession of it, in life, and spirit and power. My soul mourns deeply over the cause, because it is the cause of Christ Jesus; a cause which rightly adhered to and rightly propagated among mankind, would pull down the kingdom of satan, release from his unmerciful yoke, which deluded mortals foolishly and servilely wear, and make them inexpressibly happy, both in this world, and that which is to come. It is with pleasure, my dear friend, that I find my mind free to converse with thee on these subjects. It is a demonstration to me, that thy heart is in a good measure offered willingly to the service of the day. If there have been too many years of inattention, let the time past be sufficient; and by diligent waiting and frequent retirement, let the latter growth be strong, vigorous, and lasting. Feeling, from time to time, after that power which causes a fresh dedication of all, thou wilt not only witness a

getting dominion over these weaknesses and foibles which have too easily beset, and a growing in the saving experience of good, but thy inward peace and domestic happiness will be also increased by seeing the spreading of the same divine virtue in thy family; and those who by the ties of nature and blood are near, will be made still nearer and dearer by the bond of a spiritual relationship.

LETTER CIII.

6th Mo. 1771.

HE ——— lies composed at present, often lifts up his hands, and waits the appointed time 'till the great change comes. Indeed the angel of death seems near his couch, but the angel of the divine presence attends likewise in this last and sharpest trial. 'Tis good to be near him, because divine goodness is near him also. How long it may please the great Creator, that his excellent spirit shall continue in his poor emaciated body, I know not, but it looks as if it would not be many days.

LETTER CIV.

11th Mo. 1771.

I HOPE this will find thee safe arrived at home, and that home has an agreeable relish after thy long peregrination : it is one of the advantages that accrues from travelling, that we return with a renovation of keen appetite for our domestic satisfactions. Indeed it is great cause of thankfulness to him that sitteth the solitary in families, that some of us enjoy these satisfactions in so great a degree. I wish we may be enabled more and more to devote ourselves, and all that appertains to us, to the service of the cause of Truth in our generation, remembering, every now and then, the station to which the church hath appointed us, and suffering this remembrance to be as a stay to our natural vivacity ; that by the inwardness of our spirits we may at the same time witness a growth in wisdom, strength, and experience, and live and walk lively examples and savoury documents to others. This will make much for our peace in the midst of the troubles which we must expect to meet with here, and for our preparation to have admission some where, any where, within the gates of

that kingdom where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

LETTER CV.

12th Mo. 1771.

ALAS ! my friend, this is a day of weakness and distress, a day of stripping and famine. It greatly behooves us to gird up the loins of our minds and be sober ; that if the Master shall please to bid us do any thing in his house, we may be ready to do it, and thereby obtain his approbation, which is of more value than the smiles and favour of unstable men. For my part, I think it is disreputable (humanly speaking) to be indifferent in, or desert, or betray a good cause, which we have avowed and confederated with others to support and maintain : there is something very mean and ignoble in being false to one's trust, and deceiving one's associates with whom we have been linked together by sacred and solemn ties. But when this cause is no less than that of Christianity itself, the shewing it forth by its fruits in our lives and conversations, and the spreading of it among men, through the qualifications of the spirit ; as it is of the highest importance to be faithful to it, for our own

sakes and the sakes of others, so it is of the most dangerous consequence to act against it.

“ For verily I say unto you, ’till heaven and
 “ earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no
 “ wise pass from the law ’till all be fulfilled.
 “ Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of
 “ these least commandments, and shall teach
 “ men so, he shall be called the least in the
 “ kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall
 “ do and teach them (here is conduct and
 “ preaching united) the same shall be called
 “ great in the kingdom of heaven.”

LETTER CVI.

THUS one after another we are overtaken by some messenger sent to summon us from time to eternity ! happy those who, keeping straight accounts with their Maker, witnessing daily the debt incurred by their trespasses, to be cancelled by his mercy, in and through his beloved son, and his judgments, are in readiness to obey the summons. Pain of body surely is enough for the poor creature to struggle with. May we in that hour, dear friend, feel peace of mind, that peace which results from the consciousness of a life devoted not to serve ourselves only, but princi-

pally to the cause of religion, which in the end will be found to stand all her votaries in best and most effectual stead. A friend in need, is a friend indeed.

LETTER CVII.

10th Mo. 1772.

INDEED we are on manifold accounts debtors to our great Benefactor, and this query we should often know to pass through us, “ Say, what shall we render to him for all “ his benefits ?” and as this enquiry is made in sincerity, we shall be likely to see and feel what he calls for in return at our hands : and this, my dear friend, will be found to be no less than our all. Our very existence ; that this existence is not wretched and miserable with pain and trouble here, that we have comfortable and endearing connections of natural and spiritual fellowship ; that we have the means of decent and reputable support for ourselves and families, and that if happily we are favoured to feel and feed upon any thing of a divine and super-natural kind, which enables us to rub through the dangers and difficulties of this troublesome, uncertain life, and gives a gladdening hope of a joyful

eternity ; all these are owing to the special grace and mere unmerited favour of our Creator, upon whose providence as we entirely depend, so it is our duty and true interest to resign and dedicate all, body, soul and spirit, time and talents, to him and his service, as in the course of his wisdom, and holy counsel, he shall call for them from us. There is (in the confirmed apprehension of several) a visitation, an invitation to the youth. Some seem to have embraced it, and to seek after the renewings of it upon their minds (without which they are not likely to retain it savingly in their knowledge :) others bow down their heads as a bull-rush, under the forcible weight of the copious gospel shower descending from the instrumental vehicles of the clouds, and anon raise them again to look about at the states of others, or at the delusive splendors of a vain, deceitful world, to their hurt and hindrance : and there are (it's to be feared) of such visited youth, who have in their hearts departed from the sense of it, and returned like the dog to his vomit, or the sow that had been washed, to wallow in the mire. While I thus write, it has been repeatedly shewn me, how carefully we, who have arrived at the summit of the stage of conspicu-

ous action, and are seen in our several spheres, ought to handle the law and the testimony : how careful we should be to let our conduct and conversation shine instructively before all, that we may not by any lightness (to which a constitutional vivacity may bias us (give a kind of sanction, or encouragement to such as are unsteadily sliding off the foundation of inward conviction and chastening judgment in their own minds : for indeed in my apprehension, the want of patiently learning these first rudiments of religion, is the grand cause why we have so few good scholars in the school of Christ.

LETTER CVIII.

1st Mo. 1771.

'TIS true his (——'s father) uniformly well-spent life, must afford him on the retrospection, a conscious satisfaction ; and I believe he has the purest and best consolations, in as great degree and frequency as most men, yet he finds pain of body hard to bear, and when the strength and flesh fail, and the gloomy path is begun to be trod, nature shrinks at the approach of the final destruction of all that is visible, and the best

have occasion for all their best support to stand the shock, undaunted. What then must the loose, the vain, the libertines, who have given the lie by their conduct and conversation to a high and holy profession, feel in that day and hour, when they have no oil in their lamps, no treasure in store against that pinching time?

LETTER CIX.

7th Mo. 1771.

HE (——'s father) lived in watchful fear and circumspection: he died in a holy confidence, triumphing over death and hell, and yielding only that which was mortal and perishable to the grave. The last words which he was heard to utter (and that only a short time before his departure) were expressive of the help and comfort which he felt in the last extremity. And when nature could not produce intelligible words, his motion and gesture (well known to his intimates) were such as he was wont to use when his spirit was raised in the dominion of the seed of life. Since his translation, I feel to myself exceedingly weak, sometimes greatly affected at this final separation, at other times more cheerful,

and thankful for the many domestic comforts remaining.

LETTER CX.

6th Mo. 1772.

I DOUBT not but some of you wish for his (——) return ; but am also of opinion, that besides the good accruing to them with whom he is present, by his presence, advantages may also accrue to you, from whom he is absent, by his absence. If you do not feel your strength, ye feel your weakness, and from this sense of want, and the uncertainty of instrumental aid, I trust ye look with anxious solicitude to him who sees in secret, and is the only sure effectual help and supply of his people.

LETTER CXI.

12th Mo. 1771.

CHANGE is the condition of our nature and place ; and the support and consolation which is alone sufficient to give firmness to our spirits, and bear them up through and over all the changes which may await us, is the blessed and unchangeable Truth ; which

whoever in honest simplicity adheres unto, he or she may pass through good report, or evil report, may be cried up, or cried down, may please or displease, in the estimation of changeable mortals; but the present and future reward of such, is and will be sure: even that substantial peace which the world is not able to give, by all its gratifications and smiles; nor to take away by its persecutions and frowns. And whoever departs, in heart, from this blessed principle of Truth, and maketh flesh (or these reasonings and schemes which belong to flesh) his confidence, however he may be censured or commended by short-sighted men, who judge from outward appearances, and see not the heart; yet such in that state are not under the divine approbation, but displeasure; and their end, without repentance, will be miserable. I wish you all may be disposed to make choice of the good part: I am persuaded if that was generally the case with you, a fountain would be opened in your family, to wash and to bathe in, to drink and be refreshed at, to your general joy and gladness; for the good-will of heaven has, I believe, hovered over you, with blessings ready to be poured into your hearts, if prepared to receive them. And as to you.

the elder children of so highly-favoured a family, on whose account my solemn offerings have been often made, what can I say to you, which you do not know ? ye have not wanted for clear discoveries of duty ; ye have been favoured both with instruction and correction ; by the same powerful touch of a divine finger, ye have conceived a disrelish for the vain, unsubstantial gratifications of the world, and a relish for those solid comforts which are in the precious Truth. For the sake of your own standing and growth in that which is good ; for the sake of the powerful efficacy and influence of good example within your sphere of action, I beseech you, my beloved friends, above all things, cultivate the gracious visitations, which ye have aforetime experienced, by frequent retirement, and therein diligently seek after a renewal thereof upon your spirits. Avoid, as much as in you lies, every thing which ye find to unfit you for this holy commerce, and let it be your principal watch and care to keep the vessel clean (no matter how empty) which receives (when it pleases infinite wisdom to communicate it) that most excellent treasure, the joy of God's salvation.

LETTER CXII.

2d Mo. 1779.

MANY changes happen in the course of time. Nature in every part of it, within us and without us, is subject to change. There is one principle of a spiritual kind, which changeth not, neither waxeth old, nor decayeth. Our spirits would do well to lay hold on it, to be leavened, regulated and guided by it. We shall find no friend, no helper, no counsellor like it here, to steer us, to sustain us through the perils and difficulties of this life; pilot us safe through the dreadful gulph, terrible to human nature, and launch us into that illimitable ocean of happiness which knows no shores.

LETTER CXIII.

12th Mo. 1779.

WHAT more is to be expected by any of us in this life, than an alternative of agreeable and disagreeable occurrences? Winds and tempests purify the atmosphere; snow and frost fructify the land, Let us then, in

the day of adversity, adopt the language of the psalmist (57. i.) and in the intervals of tranquility, with which our merciful Creator is pleased to favour us, let us make good use of the present quiet and composure allotted, to cultivate, to renew, to strengthen our acquaintance with the omnipotent Author of all that is good : so shall prosperity, as well as adversity, be sanctified to us, and equally contribute to the consolidating of our present peace, and ensuring of our future happiness.

LETTER CXIV.

1779.

MY mind is, at times, deeply bowed in thankfulness ; but I feel that tranquility and all these lower enjoyments are exceedingly uncertain ; they have also their alloy. May we be then like-minded with the royal psalmist, “ One thing have I desired of the Lord, “ that will I seek after, that I may dwell in “ the house of the Lord all the days of my “ life ; to behold the beauty of the Lord, “ and to enquire in his temple. For in the “ time of trouble, he shall hide me in his “ pavilion ; in the secret of his tabernacle,

“ shall he hide me ; he shall set me upon a
 “ rock,” &c.

LETTER CXV.

9th Mo. 1770.

THOU knowest, my dear friend, that religious growth does not consist in writing and speaking on religious subjects : it consists in the divine life prevailing in our minds.— Poverty of spirit is the plain decent every-day cloathing which properly belongs to, and becomes the Christian man. This cloathing makes us appear comely in the sight of the Master and of spiritual men. When his followers patiently wear this garment, and keep it unspotted from the world, in his own time (which they will find to be the best) he will array them with robes of righteousness, and garments of praise. But then they must be stripped again of these which are the Lord's ornaments, and possessing their souls in patience, must contentedly put on their old raiment, the ordinary livery of the master's servants. Hence is seen the propriety of that expression of his to his disciples ; “ The
 “ poor ye have always with you, but me ye
 “ have not always.” Had there not been a

word on this solemn subject in thy letter, it would have been very welcome to me, because I know thy time to mention that subject is not always ready. What I was desirous of was, that, whether absent or present, there might still be kept open a door of free communication of sentiments on these matters between us, by which some good might, and I think no evil could, enter. I can say of a truth, that fervent and renewed have been my desires and petitions on thy behalf, since I wrote last, and I trust thy conflicts and besetments, thy sense of thy own weakness, and of thy lack of best wisdom, thy indisposition of body, thy feebleness of mind, will all work together for good. Certainly the good will of the Almighty Benefactor is towards thee, and good and gracious are his designs upon thee. Else, why should my poor spirit be so often dipped into sympathy with thee, and such petitions be formed in travail in the deeps, on thy account? Oh! be faithful to the discoveries of the light which maketh manifest, and to the requirings of duty in the day of small things, and great will be thy peace, and glorious thy reward; such as “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath “it entered, or can enter, into the heart of

“ the natural man to conceive.” Do not be restless, uneasy and impatient, to quit thy place of probation and present trial ; but rather use the more diligence (in proportion to the dangers and difficulties of thy situation), in seeking for inward strength and wisdom, to be enabled to acquit thyself acceptably in the sight of heaven. Remember wherever we are, it is by the appointment, or permission of all-wise Providence, who sees both us and our engagements. It is not the way to gather strength of mind, to endeavour to fly in our own wills, from the field of labour and battle.—Let us stand our ground, keep close to the standard of Truth ; if we cannot put an enemy to flight, let us however not flinch ourselves, but openly declare and shew on what side we are ; on the side of him who was never foiled in battle. Thus, dear friend, thou wilt grow stronger and stronger, and feel “ The peace which passeth all (rational) “ understanding,” to flow as a mighty stream in thy soul, bearing down before it all the little, trifling, hindering things, and thou wilt be able (as thou art faithful and obedient) to encounter things of greater moment and difficulty, with honour and success. So, in the love of our Holy Head, I affectionately salute

thee, and commit thee, with my own soul, to his divine protection.

LETTER CXVI.

9th Mo. 1776.

IF these means of intercourse between us were not used, still I trust the root of friendship lives in our minds. I know in my best seasons, it produces good desires and petitions for my beloved friend. Then, when Truth at the same time expands and prostrates the heart, my prayers are for thee, that thou mayst submit to the operation of that power which reduces, changes, and forms; that thou mayst give up all with an unreserved dedication, and simply be what the Lord would have thee to be. Long has he continued his favour to thee; frequent and powerful have been his visitations. Time flies on with unremitting speed; the end of all things approaches. Happy will it be for those who have here, in all humility, received the Truth in the love of it, have bowed their necks to it's yoke, and have not been ashamed to confess Christ in his lowly appearances before men; such will reign with him triumphantly in an eternity of joy. May that, my dear friend,

be thy state and experience now ; and this, thy portion for ever !

LETTER CXVII.

10th Mo. 1786.

MAN was formed and designed by his Creator for religious, as well as civil society. The spirits of the well-minded, met together, aid one another, and a joint labour more readily opens the spring, which is much choaked up by formal, lifeless, lukewarm, as well as libertine, professors in our society. Besides, it is the will of the common Father of his people, that his children shall, at stated seasons, present themselves before him in a general way, though satan should come also among them ; though in this mixed state of things, the spirit of antichrist in a mystery should bear rule, and prevail to spread a cloud over the assembly ; yet is this enemy often rebuked, and the cloud known to be dissipated, and the visited children made to rejoice together, under the precious influence of unmixed good.

Of what use is thy over-much thoughtfulness ? Or thy looking too far before thee ? It would be as well for thee, I believe, if thou

wert, in some respects, near-sighted, like myself. We are creatures, as of a moment, and should still endeavour to make the best use of the present moment, which only is ours ; doing in prudence and moderation what is in our power, humbly dependant on the Author of the existence of our souls and bodies, for his daily supply to both.

LETTER CXVIII.

I DO not wonder at worldly pleasures, worldly profits, and worldly splendor captivating the minds of youth ; they see objects thro' ~~and~~ a false medium. Nothing less than a great supernatural power can change our vile affections, and nothing less than the renewings of the same power can preserve them right, when so changed. A sense of this made David cry out, “ Create in me a clean heart, and “ renew a right spirit within me.” And the apostle Paul most beautifully expresses— “ According to his mercy he saved us, by the “ washing of regeneration and renewing of “ the holy ghost.” This renewing then is what we have to wait to experience. This transformation from the spirit of the world in-

to the divine image, must be effected and continued by the renewing of the mind.

LETTER CXIX.

MAY every feeble effort, and aspiration after the right thing, grow and gather strength in every one ; that not one grain of the precious seed of the kingdom may be lost, or unimproved ; for surely nothing is of equal value with the visitation of heaven ; it is indeed the breath of life, by which man becomes a living soul.

I am persuaded thou art diligent in improving thy own stock ; though not making any ostentatious display of much trade, too often the prelude of disreputable failures. If thou holdest on in this little, low, frugal, industrious way, I shall expect to find thee rich.

There seems to be many promising youth up and down, many buds and blossoms, but there is not produced proportionable fruit. The plants seem wholly of a right seed, and of the great and good Husbandman's right hand planting ; yet many of them miscarry in their growth ; they get out of the fertile, penetrable, yielding soil, and strike their roots into a stiff hard clay ; or the branches, for want

of pruning, grow too gross and run into timber; or perhaps they are suffered to bear too much at once, while they are young. Their strength is exhausted, and they wither away.

LETTER CXX.

6th Mo. 1789.

I AM sensible of many weaknesses and deficiencies attending me, and wish, for the sake of the most noble cause which ever existed, that I were a more able advocate for it. However, if we faithfully do, according to the ability received, what appears to be our duty, though it may appear to ourselves and others a very little thing, we shall not want encouragement and help to go forward. A little pure gold is far more valuable than a great deal of base metal. So I wish thee, beloved friend, to be strengthened and encouraged, and to love the littleness, and not think the day of small things long. Thou hast, I believe under right direction, put thy hand to the gospel-plough: neither look back, nor too far before thee, nor about thee, at the spaciousness of the field of labour; but just turn up the furrow thou art, for the time being, engaged in, according to the present skill and

ability afforded. “ Whatsoever thy hand
 “ findeth to do, do it with thy might,” the
 present might ; and may the Lord Almighty
 bless and prosper, and increase that might,
 to the honour of his great name, to the edifi-
 cation of his church, and to thy own solid
 peace !

I had some agreeable feeling conversation
 with dear ———, who seemed inwardly
 strengthened and supported under this fresh
 trial, which she met with, on her return home
 from about three months labour in her Mas-
 ter’s service. Let us mark the economy of
 divine Providence, and his dealing with his
 faithful servants ; those that leave all for the
 gospel’s sake, shall receive the “ Hundred
 “ fold” (it’s said) “ now in this time,” but
 “ with persecutions ;” there must be the ne-
 cessary alloy in this world , “ in the world to
 “ come, eternal life.”

LETTER CXXI.

I FIND ——— has been, for some time past,
 very low in his mind ; yet I trust it is of
 good, and will be for his good. Great altera-
 tion indeed ! his soul, which used to be like
 a well watered-garden, now like a sandy de-

sert ; but I believe he neither complains nor murmurs. Various are the dispensations which some have to pass through ; similar to those which attended the great Master. He had a long fast, forty days and forty nights, and was sorely tempted ; but the text says, “ He was led up of the spirit ” into that wilderness. And if we be led by the good spirit, all will be well ; rejoicing and suffering, feasting and fasting are in his hand ; his visited children, disciples and followers, have only patiently to abide under his government, who leads in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment.

LETTER CXXII.

AS we resign ourselves to the divine protection and ordering, by a wheel (as it were) within a wheel, he effects his gracious purposes concerning us, which the contumacy of our own wills, or the fallacy of our own contrivances might frustrate ; happy would it be for us, if we could lose our own wills in the will of God. The flesh profiteth nothing in the work of religion ; religion which by all means should be the chief concern of our lives, the beginning, the middle, and the end.

of our pursuits and desires. Choose that good part, seek that first, and other things necessary will be added.

A little lapse of time furnishes many new subjects of remark, and many concurring instances of the instability of human prosperity ; conspiring to manifest that in this world we shall all, in rotation, meet with trouble ; and that there is no permanent, substantial happiness, but in the comforts of religion. Happy for those who lay the foundation of life on this rock, and who are preserved thereon through all the perils and changes which await this state of existence. They too, in this world, will have their portion of trouble ; but that peace which passeth all conception of the natural man, will be their solace in the midst of outward affliction. I heartily wish thee, my dear friend, in particular, and your family in general, to be partakers of this hidden treasure, which I believe divers of you, both elder and younger, know by past experience, not to be a mere speculative notion, or product of a heated imagination ; but a substantial, sure, and certain principle, which, when possessed and retained, in renewed experience, is sufficient to enable us to do and suffer all things as we ought.

LETTER CXXIII.

4th Mo. 1786.

I AM concerned for dear ——'s frequent indisposition, the case is slight and delicate ; may the contents, the precious contents be preserved in good condition, and not suffer any damage thereby. Our poor visible fabrics will be battered and hurt, and get out of repair ; they are frail and perishable ; but the spirit which is invisible, is eternal. May we often watch unto prayer, in order to be helped to commit and commend our own spirits and the spirits of one another to divine keeping and protection ; that so, when a total wreck shall be made of these bodies, our souls may be safe, centred in everlasting happiness.

Dear cousin ——'s connexions have been tried with affliction of body ; trouble will take it's rounds ; they are best off who are most resigned. —— is inured to penance, mortification and the cross ; this is very contrary to the generality of mankind ; this is far from sowing to the flesh ; 'tis in reality and in truth sowing to the spirit : may the cross prove the divine blessing here and hereafter,

life everlasting ! The seed time (which is the spring time) is long with some ; the winter intrudes upon it, continues long, and as it were unseasonably ; but let us remember who it is that orders the course of the seasons ; and we have often had to observe, that the most genial summers, and most fruitful harvests, succeed such seasons as these. Yet are not the Lord's children insensible of those fructifying showers which freshen, cherish and make prolific in this spring ; and few I believe are more favoured that way than our friend. I think with me it's always winter, frost and rain, short days and long nights ; yet believing that it is by the appointment of him, who is Lord of the seasons, I am content ; nay I wish for no change, but by his ordering. If I feel his powerful baptizing hand upon me, 'tis enough for me ; but without this, I am like an owl in the wilderness, and pelican in the desert, flat, dry, insipid.

This hand of power, I acknowledge, I have at times felt since I saw thee, not only in season (in some of our public meetings) but as it were out of season, on the road, on my bed, &c.

LETTER CXXIV.

——— is a pretty youth ; how beautiful, how useful would such be, if they suffered the great hammer (the omnific word) to fall upon them and break them in pieces. Thou hast felt the strokes of this great hammer ; it has softened, and is fashioning thee, I trust, for a vessel of honour ; yield thou unto it, and be passive and pliable under its influence, till it make thee what Infinite Wisdom would have thee to be, exactly both as to form and use. In a little time all this scene will be closed upon us all, our places and our acquaintance will know us, and speak of us no more. In the closing of this scene, when every thing else shall fail, what will it be to us to witness the Lord to be the strength of our hearts, and our portion for ever.

My beloved friend, farewell ; be humble be diligent, be honest ; and may the Lord Almighty delight to bless thee and comfort thee, and preserve thee in his fear and in his favour, now and for ever !

LETTER CXXV.

THE conversation of my dear friends, if happily seasoned with good, the communing together on the way, if the Master should graciously please to condescend to join the company, is pleasing and profitable indeed ; and in this I delight. But if no feeling friend should be near, no person who can converse in the Hebrew tongue, still the children of the kingdom are not at a loss ; their teacher, their comforter, their sure guide, and faithful friend is with them, and in them.

At the select meeting at ———, ——— came out with something so lively and sensible, as quite delighted me ; I care not by what name men might call it, I was satisfied that it issued from a divine spring ; thanksgiving was not only in my heart, but on my tongue ; and my spirit rejoiced in commemoration of that goodness, which followeth down from generation to generation : had thou been with us, I believe thou would also have been made glad. Well, my dear friend, I am pleased that thou ventured out with thy little remarks. No doubt thou appeared as a fool, so did the great Master be-

fore the scribes and pharisees and elders ; but this is a shame which I trust thou wilt gradually learn to despise, and be more and more conformable to this most excellent and perfect pattern, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; who, though possessed of immortality, and dwelling in accessible light, left the bosom of his Father, and came down from the heights of his glory, for the redemption and restoration of fallen man. And as he hath loved us, so ought we to love one another, and all mankind in general ; not seeking our own things, and tenacious and studious of our own false delicacy and honour, but “ Buried with him by baptism into “ death” unto these things, that we may be living witnesses of his resurrection in life and power.

LETTER CXXVI.

I NOTE thy state, my dear friend, poor enough of itself, but receiving an additional tinge from the poverty of the places, where thy temporary residence is ; I note with satisfaction thy sensible expression, “ If I be “ idle I shall be lost.” I note thy endeavours to keep up the daily sacrifice, though

the offering may seem but small. These things I note, and take comfort in them, believing that thou art an object of divine compassion, and that his love and tender regard is towards thee. I have not since wrote, as thou most kindly recommends, nor heard from that quarter. We are poor, insufficient creatures; without supernatural aid can neither help ourselves, nor others; and this aid we are patiently to wait for, and it will come to such in the right and best (which is the Lord's) time. The help intended for thee does not seem likely to come from province meetings, which thou missed being at; but surer, better, more substantial, even inward, immediate help, I hope will be thy comfortable portion and happy experience.

LETTER CXXVII.

3d Mo. 1777.

I THINK I am neither bigot, nor zealot, but I find that the holy scriptures, contained in the Old and New Testament, and the records of the experiences, travels, and sufferings of our ancient, faithful friends, do me most good. My spirit hath unity with them, as I peruse their writings, or hear them read:

they tend to strengthen the root of life, and are made instrumental to stir up the pure mind. The writings of others, upon whom this day of the Lord has not so fully risen, are more in the mixture, and have a strong colouring of the glimmering, uncertain twilight, under which their authors see religious matters. It looks indeed preposterous for us to go to them for instruction, as it would be for a man to have recourse to obscurity for more light; yet to a mind which pants after the coming (i. e. the advancement) of the reign of Christ upon earth, it affords an agreeable sensation, to be made witness of the springing up and spreading of Truth among those who are not yet come to a full perception and confession of it: this was cause of joy to the prophet, when he could say, “The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up.”

The genuine inspired writings of holy men we read, and ought often to read for our edification, the productions of such as have not attained to so great a degree of Christian perfection; though religious men, we may also read for our satisfaction, keeping a diligent watch over our spirits, lest accumulated know-

ledge should puff us up, and remembering the pathetic prayer, “ I thank thee, O Father, “ Lord of heaven and earth, because thou “ hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes ;” and the subsequent exhortation, “ Take my “ yoke upon you and learn of me ; for I am “ meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find “ rest unto your souls ; for my yoke is easy, “ and my burden is light.”——Here is the Master himself teaching, who unites knowledge and practice ; speculation, and even right notions of Christianity of themselves, are vain ; “ If ye know these things, happy “ are ye if ye do them.” Such are the precepts of Christ, and such the spirit of christianity ; by their excellence, sublimity, clearness, simplicity, and comprehensive fulness, bearing the genuine stamp of their Divine Original, very different from the tedious, ambiguous manner of many writers on religious subjects, who confuse what they pretend to explain, and obscure what they take upon them to illustrate ; so that though the text is clear and plain, the comment is often dark and unintelligible.

LETTER CXXVIII.

4th Mo. 1780.

I Accompanied dear —— into the county of —— . I believe the prospect of his children's agreeable settlement, has humbled his heart into still lower depths of resignation, dedication, and obedience, as thinking that he can never do enough for so gracious, so bountiful a Master. I love to see a growth in the Divine gift, and individuals waxing strong, taking firm root, increasing in the increase of God, and bringing forth fruit to his praise.— What is this world? It is vanity and vexation, and will soon be over; but all things truly great and noble, are involved in the cause of God and his Christ upon earth.

I have had some thoughts about going to London this year, but am not yet determined. I hope that at our ensuing meeting of ——, I may be favoured with some little sense of what is best to be done. I should not like to be backward in any little help which I might be indued with ability to give, even in the smallest degree, towards carrying on this great and important work; and at the same time I often fervently desire to be preserved

from unnecessary, forward intrusion, and busy meddling in matters, which, in the economy of Infinite Wisdom, have been allotted to other men : I think I am pretty much will-less as to this migration.

LETTER CXXIX.

THOU art but a poor creature of a moment ; strive to improve the present moment, and be not careful about to-morrow : 'tis bad economy, and not the way to grow rich, to be still employed in speculating about the future, and neglect laying hold of the present advantages, which, rightly husbanded, open the way to future prosperity. I think thou art very like me in thy failings, I mean thy weaknesses : my poor spirit is too apt to anticipate trouble ; it is like a reed shaken by the wind. May we be both endued with right fortitude, preserved looking and leaning towards Him, who is a present help in every needful time to his humble, depending children, not calling up to ourselves, as out of the earth, (raising by our own imaginations) evil which the Lord never created ; but relying implicitly on his gracious Providence, and learning what this meaneth, “ Sufficient for the day is

“ the evil thereof ! ” The opinion of people respecting our conduct is not to be too minutely minded, nor wholly neglected. If they are disposed to find fault, they will do it, let us act as we will ; and however we should act, we need not expect to please all. Let us keep to the simplicity of Truth, watching that we enter not into temptation, and praying continually that we may stand approved in the sight of heaven, let the men of the earth judge as they may.

I was a good deal indisposed in ——— with a cold which I took thither, and increased there ; however I attended (through favour of Providence) all the meetings, and my ordinary duties there. Notwithstanding a sense of our being a greatly favoured and greatly depraved people, I was satisfied as to myself in general, having witnessed at times these humbling, baptizing seasons ; which I suppose being my highest lot, are the lot of my inheritance, and peculiarly proper for me.

Our amiable friend ——— appeared in the religious line in the meetings of worship and discipline in ——— yesterday ; I hope well for her, but am not yet favoured to be a witness for her ; I do not therefore pretend to find

fault. Far be it from me to judge with my own judgment in such weighty matters. If it be of the highest authority, it will not only stand, but grow and make its way, and possess the gates (the judgments) of those who are at present perhaps rather enemies through prejudice and partiality.

Farewell—be of good comfort; he that careth for the sparrows doubtless cares for thee; they are a numerous tribe; we hardly seem to know their use in the creation, and yet they live by his bounty. May his merciful regard be ever extended to thee, and his almighty arm be ever underneath to support and cheer thy spirit! This is the poor but sincere offering of unaltered friendship, and believe me thy affectionate faithful friend.

LETTER CXXX.

AS religious persons, we may put on a *veil* of too much delicacy: there is a shame which we ought to despise. We ought not only to be religious, but to appear so; not indeed making a pompous display of austerities, and appearing unto men to fast (which is not bearing the cross, but riding in an exalted manner upon it) but shewing forth by our

conduct, conversation, outward appearance, and demeanour, that we are followers of him who gave himself an example for us to follow. Some of you, the elder branches of that family, my beloved friends, have been visited, called, and chosen ; the bridegroom of souls hath knocked for an entrance, and wooed you with the most tender solicitations ; let not a false delicacy bolt the door against him who loves you, and is beloved by you, inciting you to make excuses ; such as “ I have put off
 “ my coat, how shall I put it on ? I have
 “ washed my feet, how shall I defile them ? ” I am sure “ the watchmen that went about
 “ the city have often found ” you in the course of their service, have “ smitten and
 “ wounded ” you with the artillery of the gospel ; and if now one (though of the meanest) “ of the keepers of the walls ” (the supporters of the discipline) should be made instrumental to “ take away your *veil* ” from you, to strip off that delicacy, and manifest to others that the beauty and simplicity of truth is next your heart ; be not ye ashamed to confess Christ in his lowly appearance before your acquaintance and others ; wear no longer any mask, *veil* or disguise, but rather avow your sentiments, make a good profes-

sion and say, “ I charge you, O daughters of
 “ Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye
 “ tell him I am sick of love.”

LETTER CXXXI.

I AM glad thy last reports thee in pretty good health. I hope thou continuest to endeavour to preserve that invaluable blessing, a sound mind in a sound body : there is a strong analogy between the outward and inward man ; the constitution of each is different in different persons ; some have a stronger, and others a weaker constitution, both naturally and spiritually, and require a different treatment ; but air and exercise, food and physic, nourishment and abstinence, all in proper season, are certainly good for all.— Repine not then, my dear friend, if the least pleasing of these dispensations may be ministered to thee, and according to thy estimation, be long thy portion. Thou art under a wise government, even the government of him who doth all things right. Keep there and it will be enough.

I often thought of thee while I was at ———, and did not wonder (but was pleased) that thou suffered with the suffering seed in that

place. There is a wrong spirit dominant there, which is doing much hurt ; but it looks as if its reign would be but short ; a little lapse of time will more fully manifest its falsity and its futility, and the solid, substantial truth, I hope, will more and more prevail.

LETTER CXXXII.

8th of 9th Mo. 1773.

SINCE the short conference which we had together, I have several times thought of writing to thee, but various necessary engagements much engross my time, and leave very little leisure for a correspondence with my friends ; however, I thought I would just hint to thee what might, without premeditation, occur upon the subject of our last conversation. I am a person of universal good will, and readily acknowledge that I am in a particular manner attached to the cause of my religious profession, therefore I cannot, without some concern, observe any friend of mine publicly desert and disavow this same cause which we have jointly professed ; the only reason thou gave me for discontinuing to frequent our religious assemblies, as far as I

understand the reason, (viz. a private offence taken at some individual) is in itself so unreasonable, that I cannot but look on it as only some ostensible cause, whilst the true reason lies deeper, and in the secret labyrinths of the mind. Search there, dear friend, for the original cause, and I am mistaken if thou wilt not find it to be a disrelish for the limitations and singularities which our profession requires, and a propensity to the grandeur, the pleasures, and the vanities of the world, which lies in ignorance and wickedness. But suffer me to expostulate with thee ; from what really good and useful enjoyment does our profession debar us ? are we not allowed all the conveniences and satisfactions of life, which the Almighty, beneficent Donor, is pleased to favour us with ? we are only restrained from the excess and abuse (which are known to destroy the true relish) of them, and to preclude those sensations of humble gratitude to our great Benefactor, which accompany a temperate, moderate use of his favours : and what will any of us get by joining in spirit, in covenant, in familiarity, with a deceitful, insincere world ? In the first place, we do violence to that which is of God, in our consciences ; we reject and cast

behind our backs, the many visitations and invitations which have been various ways repeated, and graciously offered : we, tacitly, by our contrasted conduct, reproach our ancestors, who lived and died in the faith, as deceivers and deceived ; or else we bring reproach on ourselves, whose lives are diametrically opposite to theirs : we greatly endanger our property and our morals, by an intimate connexion with those, who are not restrained by the fear of their Creator, from running headlong into various vices, and whose pleasure and profit it is to allure others that are in affluent circumstances, into the same excess of riot (which often ends in the same distress and embarrassment) with themselves ; by renouncing our religious profession, and forsaking our communion, we abandon that which is truth, and either adopt that which is error in its stead, or else joining from principle with no religious society, we become ensamples of irreligion, and settle in a profane course of life, injurious to our own peace, displeasing to God, and offensive to wise considerate men. Bear with me, dear friend, it is possibly the last time I may trouble thee on this head : thou art the father of a pretty numerous flock of children ; thou

art the successor of religious ancestors ; thou art come into their place and some of their possessions ; if thou would walk worthily and acceptably before the great Benefactor ; who sees all thy secret thoughts, as well as marks thy words and actions, and will assuredly reward according to our works, it is (in my sense) highly necessary for thee to come down in thy mind, and in humility and sincerity seek for divine wisdom and strength, that thou may be preserved safe through this dangerous and uncertain state of existence ; that thou may fill up the station in which All-wise Providence has placed thee, with rectitude and propriety, as a man and a Christian ; and that thou may discharge that ponderous duty of a parent to thy offspring, in such a manner as will redound to thy own solid peace, and their substantial good ; that so when that awful period shall arrive (and how near it may be at hand is quite uncertain) when inquisition will be made into our lives and conduct, whether we have walked in the fear of our Creator, whether we have properly and gratefully received his favours and benefits, as using and not abusing them ; and whether we have stood uprightly and faithfully in our lots, spreading and enforcing the

genuine principles and spirit of Christianity by our lives and conversations, and fulfilling every relative duty appertaining to our station ; that at that solemn time, and before that tremendous Judge, Witness and Benefactor, thou may have to give up thy accounts with joy; and not with grief; that this may be thy happy experience, is the sincere desire of thy affectionate friend.

LETTER CXXXIII.

18th of 4th Mo. 1755.

HAD opportunity allowed, I should, long ere this, have acknowledged the receipt of thy affectionate lines ; though it is not easy to express that uniting virtue which cements the family together, and brings them suddenly into an acquaintance, and nearness of spirit, that requires not the ceremonies of the world's friendship to introduce, nor its arts to maintain.

I have often been comforted in times of discouragement, with this mark of having passed from death unto life, that I love the brethren ; I feel its prevalence at this time, and in it salute thee, thy dear husband and children, with fervent desires that he who hath

been your morning light and help hitherto, may be your staff to lean upon ! beloved ancients in Israel, in this your decline of natural strength, so as to fill up the station allotted you in the church of Christ. Few are the ancients left, to whom the middle aged and rising youth can look with advantage !— The Lord of heaven and earth hath gathered many to himself ; the world, in its various appearances, hath slain many others ; and some, who are not yet dead, have their garments so covered with dust, and spotted with defiling things, that they are not fit to be looked upon, nor their footsteps to be enquired after. But happy is the state of those advanced to old age, whose conduct proclaims they have not followed cunningly devised fables, but have been made living witnesses of the power and coming of Christ ! These have been powerful inducements to me, to bow my heart in holy awe, from my childhood to this day (I mean with respect to outward means) and, I am thankful to the great preserver of men, that there are such here and there to be found ; and, though painful baptisms for Zion's sake may attend in viewing the backslidings of many, yet ability is given at times, to appeal with reverend confidence.

to the Searcher of Hearts. "Thou knowest how I have walked before thee!" I trust this will be your crown of rejoicing, in an hour approaching, which I could wish very remote from you, except that the laws of nature proclaim it to be near!

The same love, and hearty well-wishing, attend your offspring! may they so acquaint themselves with the God of their parents, as to stand in their lots, and be found worthy to have their names appear in the register of the Lamb's army! Beloved young friends, suffer the advice of one that loves you (though outwardly a stranger) to have place in your minds; the experience of many years has taught me, that godliness is profitable to all things, and that real happiness is known in proportion to the progress of it in our hearts; if you look round among your cotemporaries, you will find it a sealed truth, and unspeakably comfortable to this wise number, who have sought, with unwearied diligence, the kingdom of God: first in time, as it is first in value. How beautiful upon the mountains have been the feet of these! and how strong the voice with which their conduct has proclaimed good tidings! salvation hath been their portion, and peace their safe refuge;

they have been qualified to maintain their testimony, and earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Where began these? In the immediate operation of the power of Truth in their hearts, in a humble waiting, and resignation to the Divine will! not making haste from under the refining hand: all who have known an advancement in true godliness, have begun upon this foundation; upon this low ground, but sure foundation, your worthy parents began, and built with success, and now know how precious it is in advanced life. The dew of the everlasting hills, and a sufficient share of the fatness of the earth, are the portion of every soul, which, above all other considerations, seeks the Lord in truth and sincerity. O! saith my soul, may there be such a heart in you, as to fear the Lord Almighty, and keep his commandments always! that it may be well with you, and your children.

Thus my spirit salutes you, dear youth, in the spreading of concern for your good, that you may, by means of heavenly help, be made truly happy in yourselves, a comfort to your aged parents, and useful to your brethren in the church of Christ.

I have travelled with much diligence, according to the ability given, and have had my experience enlarged in rejoicing and suffering; the last has often been my lot, but I dare not repine; to be what I ought is my only aim, and best wisdom knows the method to make me so; in his will I humbly acquiesce.

LETTER CXXXIV.

2d Mo. 4th, 1757.

THAT regard which Truth itself raised mutually in our hearts, is by no means impaired; it has often been revived since I left your land, and more especially so, upon my receiving the sorrowful tidings of the removal of thy dear husband: a circumstance, in which the affliction is, like the loss, very extensive! Thou mournest the loss of a tender husband; his children that of an affectionate father: the church laments on account of a pillar removed out of the place it filled, at a time when, to outward appearance, it was greatly wanted! This sorrow is allowable; for the great example of every virtue, even Jesus, wept for Lazarus. Nature demands it, when its connections are broken, and the

endearing, social ties dissolved ; but thou well knowest that we are all pilgrims and strangers, as our fathers were, and are journeying on through this land of affliction, towards a city which hath foundations. Why should we grieve too much, when a companion, with whom we have traversed many dubious, anxious steps, has an entrance granted him into the holy city, a few moments before us !

Upon all the glory of the earth, with all its enjoyments, upon every visible thing, one inscription is written, as the immutable law of him whose name is *Most High*—*they shall perish* : throughout all nature, and natural connexions, it has been, and must be verified ! Equally fixed is this truth, the joy and song of many generations, but *thou remainest*. On this everlasting husband, father, friend, and succour, mayst thou, and thine now lean ! and know this dispensation sanctified, to all your help, in renewing diligence so to live and move, that when the great Shepherd shall appear, and all his faithful servants with him, your portion may be among them for ever !

And now I cannot avoid addressing myself to you, the descendants of my honours—

ble friend. I am convinced the same gracious hand, which was his support and comfort, has been extended to you, for the like good purpose ; but I am jealous, the want of religious depth, and simplicity God-ward, hath been the cause of halting, and of a choice rather to embrace the present world, and have a name of eminence in it, than to have a new name, which is the name of God, and the city of God. Thus will the tenders of everlasting treasure be disregarded, and the vain shadows of things be preferred to those riches, which none ever sought with too great diligence ; or, if they sold them, got their value in exchange !

A heart sincerely concerned for your help, cannot dictate flattery : I love you, and therefore I write thus. I am also persuaded there is a seed and heritage that mourns in secret, because of its leanness, and honestly seeks relief from whence it hath ever come. May stability and patience be the girdle of their loins ! and, in the Lord's time this poor, suppliant, distressed seed, will delight itself in fatness. One hint, from my own experience, I would suggest to you ; let all your conduct demonstrate, that you remember the worthy deceased with due affection, who, though he

be dead as to the body, yet let him speak ; I have found it my duty, and a great advantage to me, to place in my view my worthy father ; and in matters of importance, or such as were dubious, to consult what would have pleased him, who was ripe in experience and judgment : I believe this reverence to the memory of a religious parent, is an oblation of sweet incense before the everlasting Father.

Farewel, dear ——, may Israel's rock be thy safe abode ; mayst thou be kept fresh in spirit ; green and fruitful in old age ; united to him, and to the many generations of the just, who are entered into the city by the pearl gates.

Farewel, ye descendants of the great and good, imitate their example ; as they have followed Christ, follow ye them : be wise, for it is true happiness ; in wisdom you will fear to offend, and this fear is an excellent defence.

LETTER CXXXV.

2d Mo. 6th, 1761.

I AM much indebted to thee for the tokens of thy remembrance of me, which I

have lately received ; there is room for renewed encouragement to seek after that which maketh fruitful in old age, even covers with verdure and plenty all the trees of the Lord's house, according to their degrees of growth. I wish to cultivate my acquaintance with these signal instances of the mercy and power of him, who is the preserver of his people ; these have known him through all their day, from their beginning to advanced years ; they can commemorate his kindness in youth, his strength in the meridian of life, and his tender regard when the shadows of the evening approach.

I observe with pleasure thy happy experience of his regard ; may it be thy covering through the valley of the shadow of death ! and may the everlasting arms be open to receive thee, when thy race here is accomplished ! I have strong hopes that the ties of nature, the example of honourable parents, their solicitude, the weight of filial duty, the evidence of the beauty and usefulness of religion, and the importance of Divine favour, will combine to excite thy children to renew their endeavour to walk in that path, which all the generations of the righteous have had to tread in, in their way to glory and peace.

Not all the wisdom of the world, nor the fallacious promises of its favour, are able to direct to this path: the way-faring man, who is on his pilgrimage, in weakness, besetments, and poverty, shall not err in his seeking, though he may be accounted simple; it is better to be a fool for Christ's sake, than wise in all the wisdom of this world!

Farewel, dear friend, I love to hear from thee.

LETTER CXXXVI.

6th Mo. 27th, 1760.

IN a sense of that sympathy and union which renders the Church of Christ a compact body, I affectionately salute thee. I cannot doubt of the propriety of thy mission to that * part of the Lord's vineyard, and it is my desire, that the wisdom and power of Truth may seal its own evidence on all thy labours. Tho' I apprehend myself a younger brother, and now addressing myself to one who was in Christ before me, permit me to offer to thy consideration a few sentiments, which have made impression usefully on my heart.

* America.

It is an awful thing to assume the name of the Lord's ambassador ; and I believe thou considerest it so : from hence appear the obligations we are under to receive from him, not only his instruction, but our credentials. These will not be withheld, if we wait our Master's time ; his sound will be certain, and his discoveries clear ; we shall not say, with Ahimas, when I ran there was a tumult, but shall distinctly receive, and deliver our Master's message, in his own wisdom and spirit.

In all our service, let us remember our Lord's dignity, and endeavour to maintain it, according to the proportion of strength vouchsafed, in purity of life, and singleness to him in our ministerial capacity, being empty without him, and only filled with his fulness.

Let us learn to try the spirits, whether they be of God ; I have seen a danger of being taken by the passions ; the passionate preacher hath affected the passionate hearer, both have been in raptures, and neither of them profited. This is a place I would endeavour to guard thee in, as I am apprehensive the emotions of thy mind are sometimes strong and animated ; mistake not the warmth of passion for gospel authority ; the first is like the rattling

thunder, which frights, but never hurts ; the last is like the lightning from the east, which illuminates, and, at times, breaks through all opposition, and melts away every obstruction. I know the integrity of thy heart, and therefore, with unreserved freedom, I remind thee of these things. May thy Urim and Thummim be with the Holy One ! look carefully to him in all thy goings, so shalt thou dip thy foot in “ oil when thou tread-
 “ est on high places, and the arms of thy
 “ hands be strengthened by the mighty God
 “ of Jacob.” If deep poverty be thy lot, be not disquieted, neither pour forth thy complaints to any mortal ; have no confident but everlasting help ; I found it safe to wear my sackcloth on my loins, and my best garments honestly and sparingly.

In the course of thy passage, be courteous to all, unless restrained by secret direction as to any particular ; which has been my experience, in some parts. Let not affability enervate thy mind, nor lead from a steady superiority attending the faithful minister ; yet guard against a spirit which leads zealous people sometimes to say, there is none righteous, *no not one*, and therein to overlook the hidden suffering seed. Let thy eye be in thy

head, so shall thy goings be ordered of the Lord, and be attended with peace to thyself, comfort to the living, and general usefulness to the church.

Farewel!—May the Lord of all consolation be with thee in every trial, support thee by his arm, enrich thee by his grace, replenish thee by his wisdom, and comfort thee by his rod and staff!

LETTER CXXXVII.

2d Mo. 1st, 1768.

OUR worthy friend and kinsman, who had been in a declining state for some time, finished his course last sixth day night, and is to be interred to-morrow. I have often been with him, to my humbling instruction. His journeying for some time before his departure, was in the region and shadow of death. I have sat by him, and accompanied his spirit, when the heavens were as brass, and he was seemingly excluded from good: this led to deep searching of heart, even, as he said, into holes and corners he had not suspected. He saw he had been short in the performance of that service which Truth would have led him into, had he been fully dedicated in heart,

to know and do his Master's will. But in adorable condescension he was visited afresh, and fed with a little bread, when ready to faint; a degree of hope has revived; a part of that crystal stream which is the sanctification and consolation of the whole city of God, arose in his soul; and it increased from time to time, until it became like the waters Ezekiel saw, issuing from the threshold, a river to swim in, a river that can never be passed! The holy canopy was often over our spirits when I visited him, to my comfort; but I never so fully understood the force of this remark, "*if the righteous scarcely be saved!*"

The applause and esteem of the judicious and injudicious, regularity of conduct, his arrival at Bethel, and the remembrance of many bedewing seasons, all proved insufficient for his repose, and were among the heavens which might be shaken, that that which cannot be shaken may remain. He languished long in great pain previous to the separation of body and soul; in which time it feelingly opened to my mind, that had his spirit been more disentangled from the love of lawful things, his warfare would have been more easily accomplished, the fetters of mortality

more easily broken, and his spirit sooner have risen triumphant over death, hell, and the grave, and on the wings of seraphic love have ascended to the realms of purity and peace. But all is well. He is admitted to a mansion of rest; and through his deep wadings, we are instructed with all diligence to fill up the measure of revealed duty, waiting for further discoveries of what may be the will of the Lord our God concerning us.

LETTER CXXXVIII.

18th of 6th Mo. 1768.

I AM inclined to make use of an opportunity now presenting, to send thee the salutation of my most sincere love, not without a sense of our heavenly Father's love, with which I hope thou art often comforted now in thy declining years; and favoured with the evidence in thyself, of having in thy measure, through Divine assistance, walked with God. I need not attempt to express to thee, the importance of such an evidence, when the soul draws nigh her flight to the land from whence there is no return. It hath been the mark for the prize in thy view, and I am thankful to feel my heart stirred up to follow such ex-

amples ; animated by their success, and the importance of the subject, to use all diligence to fill up my duty, that I may finish my course with joy.

My shattered constitution often gives me instruction, and intimates the graves are ready ; yet it hath been consistent with Divine mercy and wisdom, to raise me up again, beyond my expectation : and I hope I am bettered by my affliction, not only in what belongs to me, as an individual, but also in that wherein I am joined by all the living, in the view of the state of the church in most places ; the use I would have us make of this view, is to gird up the loins of our minds, that our example may be a strong reproof to the unfaithful, and thus collected in spirit, we may deeply feel after the putting forth of the Divine hand in service ; for though it can work effectually without instruments, yet it will also work by them ; and if the visited of God were enough devoted in heart to his service, in all the manifestations of duty, we should have more useful instruments in the church. But alas, for many, who, if they have followed to Bethel, content themselves there, and attain not a double portion of that spirit, which

those who steadily follow on, even through Jordan, are favoured with.

This imperfect work bears undoubted traces of the Creator's hand, but like half baked cakes, they seem to me to be no inconsiderable eclipse to Zion's beauty, and are often great obstructions in the way of others, as such who neither enter the kingdom of God themselves, nor suffer others. Nevertheless, the God of the whole earth is mindful of his family, and eminently favoured us in our last Yearly Meeting at London, from which I returned much recruited in bodily strength, and having my mind replenished with precious dew.

Salute, in my name, thy son and daughter ; may those who are of the younger class look to the business of the day ! the building up of the Lord's house more than their own ; unto him all our utmost dedication of spirit, time and labour, is due. My dear love attends you all.

Samuel Fosterhill,

Benj. Ferris.

2nd mo. 1806.

FINIS.

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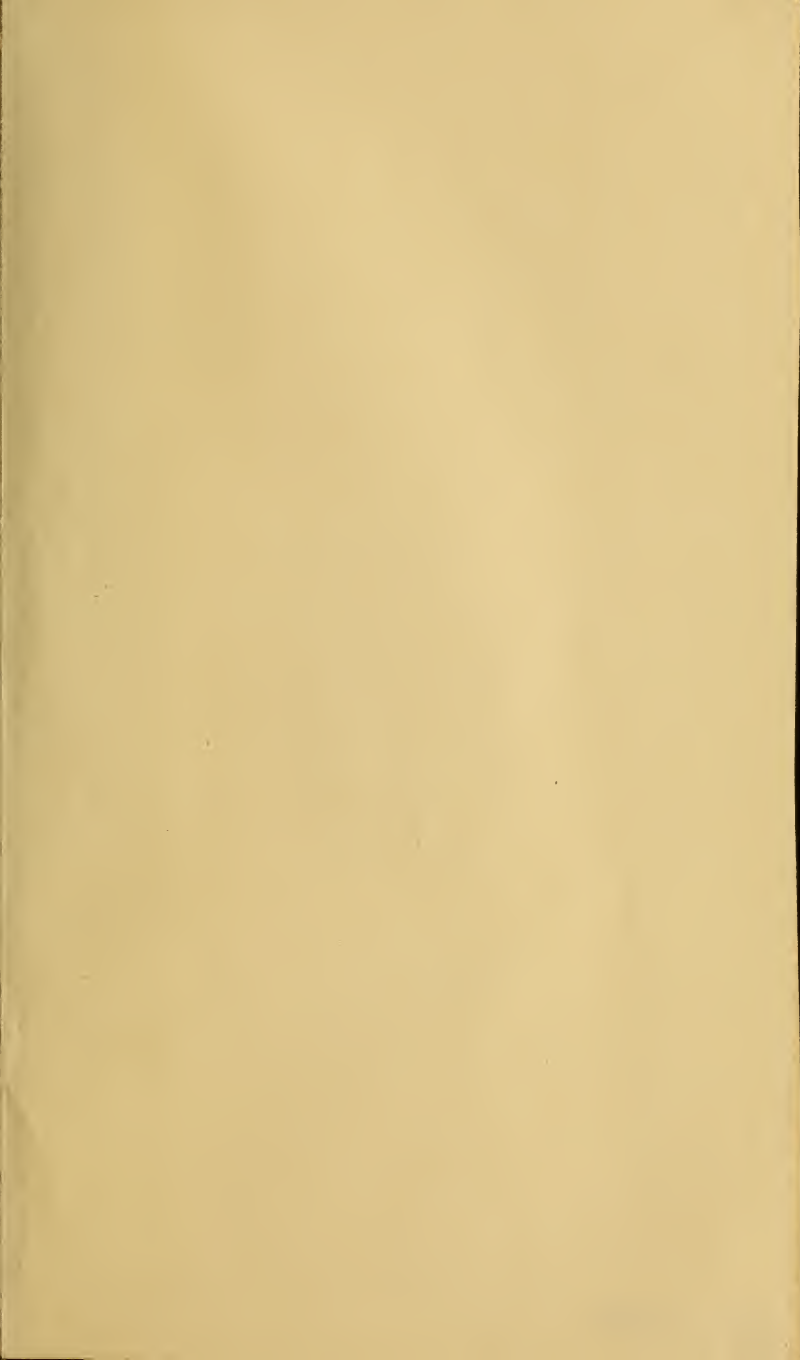
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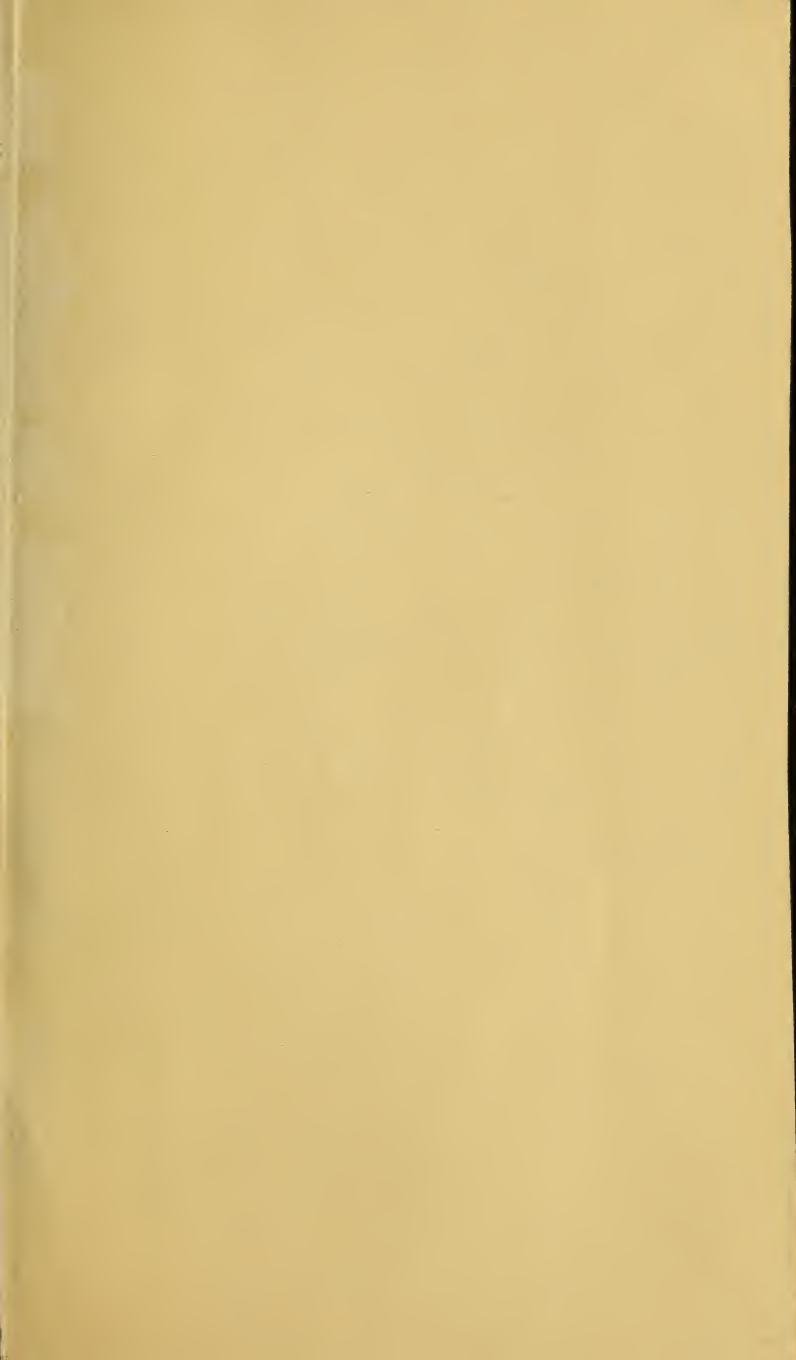
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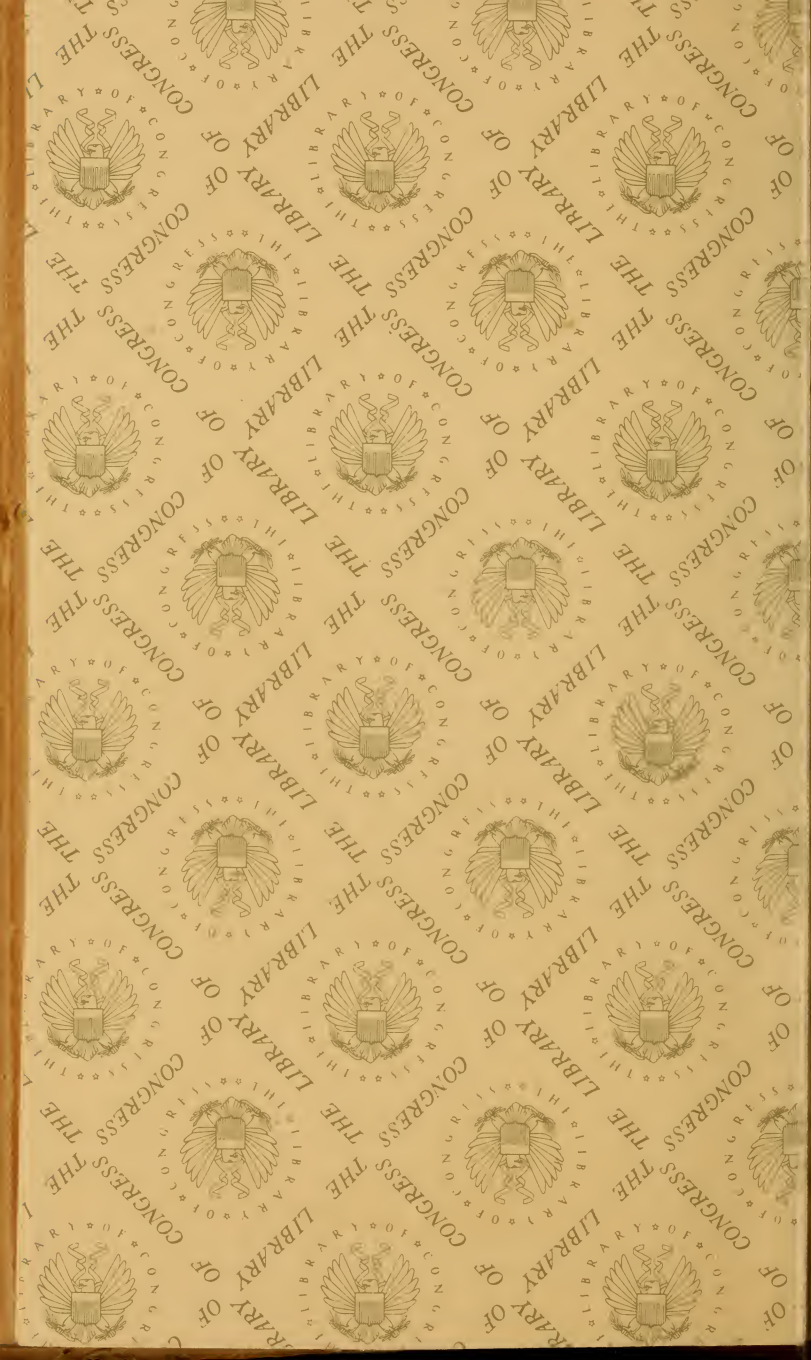
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